

## TORY FREEDOM DAY WAS A DISASTER

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world's elite tremble

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# Socialist Worker

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**TAKE ACTION  
AGAINST  
THE TORIES...**



HEALTH WORKERS march for better pay earlier this month  
PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# STRIKE TO BEAT NHS PAY INSULT

**HEALTH WORKERS SPEAK OUT >>>PAGE 3**

## LABOUR

### Starmer's purge marks a further shift to the right

KEIR STARMER is trying to rescue his leadership of the Labour Party.

He's begun a tour of Britain that involves meeting people who've stopped voting Labour and nodding along to those who come out with right wing views.

It's all backed up with an assault on left wing activists.

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## EXTINCTION REBELLION



### Convicted for protest after Patel interfered

SIX EXTINCTION Rebellion activists have been convicted for their part in a protest against the right wing press last September.

The verdict came at the end of a trial that revealed Tory home secretary Priti Patel interfered personally in how the protest was policed.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

### Riots—result of decades of poverty

AN EXPLOSION of rage swept across large parts of South Africa last week.

The looting and riots are due to a lack of fundamental change since the fall of apartheid.

Activists in South Africa spoke to Socialist Worker.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'I don't want to engage in a political culture war of any kind, I want to get on with delivering for the people of this country'**

Boris Johnson

**'There is an unpleasant odour wafting out from under my party's front door'**

Andrew Mitchell, Conservative MP isn't convinced by the direction of his party

**'I find it hard to believe that it's been 44 years since I became your Colonel in Chief'**

The Prince of Wales as he presented new Colours to the Parachute Regiment—the same week as an amnesty for British war criminals was announced

**'Communism is a failed system, a universally failed system, and I don't see socialism as a very useful substitute'**

US president Joe Biden



# Big pharma caught over charging and missing tax

**TOP DRUG companies have been found guilty of increasing the price of a life-saving steroid treatment by more than 10,000 per cent and paying rivals to stay out of the market.**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said last week that Auden Mckenzie and Actavis UK, now known as Accord-UK, had "charged the NHS excessively high prices for hydrocortisone tablets for almost a decade".

Hydrocortisone is used by tens of thousands of people who suffer from adrenal insufficiency, which includes life-threatening conditions such as Addison's disease.

Auden Mckenzie and Actavis UK increased the price of a 10mg packet by more than 10,000 percent compared with the original branded version of the drug.

The increases meant that the cost to the NHS of a single pack of 10mg tablets rose from 70p in April 2008 to £88 by March 2016, a 12,471 percent



Actavis bosses Amit and Meeta Patel

increase. The price of a pack of 20mg tablets rose from £1.07 to £102.74 per pack, a 9,501 percent rise.

The CMA said the NHS was spending approximately £500,000 a year on hydrocortisone tablets before 2008, rising to more than £80 million by 2016.

The CMA fined Accord-UK and former parent companies Intas, Accord and Allergan £155 million for overcharging.

But big pharma companies regard such measures as little more than the cost of doing business.

**VACCINE PRODUCER** Moderna is setting up in Switzerland and the US state of Delaware to cut its tax bill on vaccine sales.

The Research on Multinational Corporations last week cited a leaked contract between the company and the European Commission.

It "indicates that the company's vaccine profits will end up in some of the world's worst tax havens."

The EU, which has ordered hundreds of millions of Moderna vaccine doses, pays the company's Swiss subsidiary, Moderna Switzerland GmbH, based in Basel, Switzerland.

The country offers tax rates as low as 13 percent for foreign companies.

Another tax haven is Delaware, where the company holds 780 patents.

Under state law, income from intangible assets such as patents isn't taxed.

The company has received millions in public funding, especially from the US government.

**GAMMON BROADCASTING News** responded to its last few viewers boycotting the channel because a Tory had taken the knee with a grim inevitability. They sacked—cancelled even—said Tory former Johnson spin doctor Guto Hari. Since Andrew Neil has left to spend more time with his money in France, the channel has appointed Nigel Farage to save the day. They deserve each other.

Kneeling Nigel

**APPLE PAID just £9 million in tax in Britain last year as its sales hit over £1.1 billion. In recently filed accounts Apple Retail UK and Apple UK—posted revenue of £1.1 billion and £372 million in 2020.**

Pre-tax profit for the divisions came in at £31 million and £44 million for the year to 29 September. Yet Apple's combined bill was just £9.2 million

## Women forced to reveal rapes to keep benefits

OFFICIAL figures released last week showed that since 2019, there has been a 160 percent rise in the number of women forced to tell bureaucrats they had become pregnant from a rape, in order to escape the two-child limit on benefits.

In the year to April 2019, 510 women were exempted from the cap due to non-consensual conception. But by April 2021, this had risen to 1,330

More than 1 million children have been affected by the government's two-child limit on benefits during the pandemic, according to the same set of figures.

They show that in the year to April 2021,

### Cutting benefits

1.1 million children living in 318,000 households were hit by the cap which limits Universal Credit and child benefit support to the first two children in a household.

The pandemic has had a devastating effect on larger families. The number affected by the two-child limit is up 27 percent from 2020 figures and nearly double 2019 levels.

## Cashpoint Cameron rolls in pay and perks

TORY DAVID Cameron was paid a salary of more than \$1 million (£720,000) by Greensill Capital. This is the finance company whose dramatic collapse exposed the former prime minister's extensive lobbying efforts.

Cameron received the large annual salary for his part-time advisory role. This included an increasingly desperate attempt to secure government funds for the ailing company.

Cameron was contracted to work 25 days a year as an adviser to the board, meaning he earned the equivalent of more than £35,000 a day.

### Cameron-paid buttons

Cameron, also claimed £113,000 of public money to run his private office in the past year. Former prime ministers can claim a "public duty cost allowance".

What our cash bought is unfortunately private apparently. He has claimed £497,064 since leaving office.

## MPs betting on free stuff from bookies

**SEVEN TORY MPs and two of Keir Starmer's Labour frontbenchers took free hospitality from betting and gambling companies worth thousands of pounds in order to attend Euro 2020 football matches, the official register of interests has shown.**

The seven Tories included Esther McVey, the former work and pensions secretary, who was seen as a Tory attack dog against "scroungers". She accepted a £3,457 ticket package for England v Denmark.

Her husband, the Tory MP Philip Davies, declared the same freebies.

The Blackpool South MP Scott Benton racked up almost £8,000 worth of hospitality from various companies for England football games, as well as hospitality at Wimbledon and Royal Ascot.

Labour's Toby Perkins, a shadow skills minister, took the same package as McVey from Entain, the Gibraltar-based sports betting company that owns Ladbrokes.

Mark Tami, an opposition

Esther McVey

whip, took £1,961 from Power Leisure bookmakers to see England play Germany.

The gambling and betting industry hosted the MPs at a time when the government is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Gambling Act to consider further restrictions on their advertising.

Some MPs raised concerns during the Euros that gambling companies had been advertising heavily during the tournament.

Three Tory MPs, Graham Stuart, Stuart Andrew and Ben Bradley, were all given tickets to England v Germany at Wembley with hospitality worth £1,961 by Power Leisure.

No MPs have yet registered hospitality for the Euro 2020 final, so a string of further declarations is likely at the next publication of the MPs' register of interests.

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# NHS workers say they want action to win on pay

by ISABEL RINGROSE

**THE TORIES have delivered another blow to NHS workers. Now workers' fury has to be turned into action for a 15 percent rise.**

The people who put their lives on the line during the pandemic face a pay cut.

On Tuesday, as Socialist Worker went to press, an offer of a 3 percent pay rise was expected to be made for NHS England staff.

With the RPI measure of inflation at 3.9 percent that's a real terms pay reduction. And there were rumours that half of it was going to be a one-off payment.

Matt Tacey is a nurse from the Midlands and a member of Nurses United. He slammed the offer as "pitiful" and said it shows staff are "undervalued".

"The government's agenda is to privatise the NHS.

"They will make it not fit for purpose so they can justify selling it off to private companies.

"The NHS, built by migrants for the working class, is being destroyed by the rich."

Nina Barbosa is an NHS worker in Birmingham.

She told Socialist Worker, "The government has had multiple opportunities to demonstrate they value NHS workers, and they've not taken them."

## Pathetic

"It's pathetic. My council tax is up 5.2 percent this year," she said. "Full time workers shouldn't have to survive on food banks to survive."

NHS occupational therapist Jordan Rivera was part of a protest delivering a petition of 800,000 signatures to Downing Street on Tuesday, calling for a 15 percent pay rise.

"It's really hard to recover from



NHS WORKERS protesting earlier this month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

what we've been through when we are working so hard. And we are forced to work additional hours to make ends meet," she told Socialist Worker.

"Three percent is not going to reverse what is happening in the NHS."

Jordan added that "morale is at rock bottom."

"The George Cross being awarded to the NHS is not good enough," she said.

"It doesn't benefit us at all, it's to fob us off.

"Many people want to strike. They recognise things can't keep going the way they are. It feels like now is the time." Matt added, "Money

is splashed about and given to the Tories' mates. They spent £37 million on a track and trace system that doesn't work properly."

"A fightback is essential," Nina explained.

"We need effective resistance. The unions have to work together.

"We're not going to have an NHS in ten years if we don't sort this out."

Matt said, "I'd like to see the unions say we're not going to accept this offer, and then organise the fightback. If we don't fight we'll always lose. People are knackered, battered and tired.

"But we need to strike—I want to strike and be on a picket line.

"Without a strike this government will continue to take us for granted time and time again."

NHS workers must organise and will need full support from every trade union. And they must demand backing from the Labour Party.

Unfortunately in March Labour helped the Tories by declaring NHS workers should receive at least a 2.1 percent pay rise—far too little.

The Tories can't be allowed to get away with murder again.

## What's your story?

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- Send 'start' to the number

## Hospitals at breaking point

HOSPITALS AND ambulance services are in a deepening crisis caused by the surge in Covid-19 infections.

The removal of restrictions has coincided with pressure from the heatwave and the return of thousands of workers to offices and places of work.

NHS services have reported a surging demand from patients. Workers are being redeployed to new Covid wards and 999 calls going unanswered for vital minutes because of a lack of staff.

A weekend heatwave saw the West Midlands

Ambulance Service declaring "extreme pressure" with 999 calls exceeding levels normally seen on New Year's Day.

Temperatures are expected to continue to rise, which could potentially put even more strain on already stretched services.

University Hospitals Birmingham cancelled all its elective operations, including liver transplants on Thursday of last week.

Cancer surgeries have also been delayed at Leeds Teaching Hospital, with delays also at hospitals in Manchester and Newcastle.

NHS under strain

## No to Troubles amnesty

A PROTEST was held at Free Derry Corner last Saturday over British government plans to bring in a Troubles "amnesty".

This legislation would end the possibility of prosecutions in relation to Troubles-related offences committed before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The "amnesty" would apply to all members of the security forces and paramilitaries.

The proposal has been condemned by every political party in Northern Ireland and many families of those killed during the Troubles.

Families of the ten people killed by soldiers in the Ballymurphy area of west Belfast in 1971 said the government's plan was a "cynical attempt to bring an amnesty and a plan to bury its war crimes".

Liam Wray, whose brother Jim was killed on Bloody Sunday, was at the protest in Derry.

He said the British government was trying to bring in the new legislation because they were frightened the truth would be exposed.

"The only way if we are ever to get the full truth, because we know the truth from our side, is the exposing of the military and the security personnel and the only way you are ever going to get that is if you bring them to prosecution," he said.

People Before Profit's Eamonn McCann said, "Make no mistake about it that this will be the end of the legal route, the legal remedy for Bloody Sunday.

"I think we should all speak with one voice now and say to the British authorities, no, we are not moving on."

IN THIS WEEK

# 2005

**Jean Charles de Menezes killed**

ARMED POLICE shot and killed Brazilian man Jean Charles de Menezes at a Tube station.

Cops lied afterwards that he had been involved in a terror plot. Cressida Dick, then in charge, is now head of the Met police





# Plans for deportations to Zimbabwe may be ‘death sentence’

by CHARLIE KIMBER

## THE TORIES are pressing ahead with more mass deportations.

Zimbabweans who have been in Britain for many years are being rounded up for removal on a charter flight this week.

Over a dozen people have been detained by immigration authorities this month. Many of them have been issued deportation orders for 21 July.

Tsitsi, a Zimbabwean refugee who came to Britain 15 years ago, told Socialist Worker that being sent back to southern African could be “a death sentence”. She said, “I fled Zimbabwe, a country I loved because I was linked to a group of trade unionists and activists.

“Robert Mugabe’s regime was tearing through us. I would have disappeared if I had stayed.

“Mugabe has gone, but the new government of Emmerson Mnangagwa is no better.”

Just last year Mnangagwa made a speech saying that he would “flush out” the “bad apples who have attempted to divide our people and to weaken our systems”.

He added, “We will overcome attempts at destabilisation of our society by a few rogue Zimbabweans acting in league with foreign detractors”. His targets included those who will be on a deportation flight.

One man due to be deported, Bryan Mucheriwa, has been in Britain for 20 years and has three British children.

He told The Independent news website he felt frightened at the prospect of being returned to his home country.

“I feel so afraid,” he said. The Home Office called me last year to verify my identity, but they used someone from the government in Zimbabwe to confirm my identity.

“Even if I tried to relocate in Zimbabwe, someone in the government has all my information.

“How can I cope there? I’ll be in danger. And if I’m sent back there, I don’t know when I’ll see my kids again.” In secret meetings

## BACK STORY

### The Tories are ramping up their racist charter flight plans.

● Last year the Tories organised charter flights to Jamaica. This was met with angry opposition and protest

● Priti Patel hit out against “do-gooding celebrities” and “ill-informed Labour politicians” who had signed open letters against the charter flight last year.

● She outrageously claimed that they were standing “in solidarity with rapists and murders”

on 22 and 23 June in Zimbabwe’s capital Harare, a deal was struck between Emily Hardy of the UK High Commission and a Zimbabwean diplomat.

The agreement was for up to 150 undocumented Zimbabweans to be deported on Wednesday 21 July.

There are a number of reports of Zimbabweans snatched when they have turned up to report at Home Office centres. And there are other reports of people being taken from their homes—in Manchester, London, Southampton and Wakefield.

Many are being held in Colnbrook Detention Centre which is near London Heathrow Airport.

Stand Up To Racism denounced the deportation plan, saying, “This is another horrific stepping up of home secretary Priti Patel’s racist hostile environment.

“The Tories are upping their attempts to scapegoat people in the face of their failures over Covid-19.”

Minnie Rahman of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants said, “The Home Office must stop exiling people to countries where they face mortal danger. Nobody’s life should be put at risk because they don’t have the right piece of paper.”



## On other pages...

Damning report says black people face systemic racism >>>Page 17

EMMERSON MNANGAGWA

# Asylum seeker dies as a result of Tories’ immigration policy

AN ASYLUM seeker was found dead at a hotel near Heathrow airport on Sunday. This tragedy has occurred just a day before the Tories’ racist immigration bill was due for its second reading in the House of Commons.

The 24 year old Sudanese asylum seeker had been in Britain for just four months after sleeping rough in Calais for several months.

The hotel Crowne Plaza, where the man was found, is used by the Home Office to house asylum seekers.

A protest was held by other asylum seekers with signs saying, “Refugee lives matter” and “He is neglected to death”.

Clare Moseley from Care4Calais said, “Having survived unknown horrors in his home country and a gruelling journey to get here in search of safety we are devastated that his life was cut short here.”

Another demonstration was due to take place on Monday over the circumstances around the death.

The Metropolitan police are also investigating.

Some 29 asylum seekers

And the Home Office says the Nationality and Borders bill will stop “alarming rise” in abuses to the modern slavery system.

It claims people posing as victims shows the need for tougher laws.

“Our generous safeguards for victims are being rampantly abused by child rapists, people who pose a threat to national security and failed asylum seekers with no right to be here,” Patel claimed.

A protest to say refugee lives matter

have now died in Home Office accommodation in the last year.

This is five times as many that have lost their lives in the same period trying to cross the Channel.

Home secretary Priti Patel’s immigration bill, which will criminalise rescuing drowning migrants, looks to punish asylum seekers attempting to flee to Britain.

Patel claims the strict new law will deter “illegal immigrants” and smugglers as well as working to deter dangerous Channel crossings.

# Anti-racists take knee over football hypocrisy

HUNDREDS OF anti-racists across Britain protested on Saturday against racist abuse faced by England footballers—and the Tories’ vile hypocrisy over it.

Up to 200 people gathered outside Downing Street, to take the knee.

The Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) protest was organised after black football players Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Sako faced racism online following the Euros football tournament.

And the protesters were clear that the racist abuse was directly linked to the Tories’ attacks on footballers taking the knee in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

Weyman Bennett, SUTR co-convenor, told the crowd, “We should be clear we have organised this protest as a result of the racism that has come from the top—

from Boris Johnson and Priti Patel.” Alex said that the

racism in football “reflects the racism in society, especially against migrants and refugees”.

“The Tories have focused on online abuse particularly. But I think this is to try and let them off the hook for their racism,” he said.

Similar anti-racist solidarity events also took place on Saturday, Sunday or earlier in the week organised by SUTR.

They included actions in Leeds, Hackney, Oxford, Waltham Forest, Stratford, Islington, Selhurst Park,

Swansea, Lancaster, Cambridge, King’s Lynn, Coventry, Chesterfield, Newcastle, Norwich, Sheffield, Bristol, Aberystwyth, Southampton, Brighton, Wigan, Newham, Harlow and Narberth.

In Manchester on Saturday hundreds gathered for the second time in just five days.

They marched from St Peter’s Square to the football museum.

On Tuesday 700 people had taken part in a solidarity event at the city’s Marcus Rashford mural.

The take the knee protest outside Downing Street

The protest against Richard Drax

“to do the right thing” in handing back the plantation land to the people of Barbados.

Activists invited Drax to meet them at the rally. Yet they were met with a “large police presence”.

SUTR Dorset is now looking to escalate the campaign from a national and international level.

“We’re working with MPs and leading trade unions to make

sure this matter is discussed within the labour movement and parliament,” Phil explained.

And campaigners also hope to travel to Barbados to work with trade unionists and activists there.

Phil added, “We’re not going away. We’re going to continue to confront Drax, develop international networks and work closely with the trade unions.”

Socialist Worker  
WHAT WE THINK

# THE ISRAELI STATE SELLS SPYWARE TO BOOST POWER

ISRAEL IS very proud of its tech industry. So it can’t pretend it has nothing to do with the use of Israeli hacking software. This software is used to spy on tens of thousands of journalists, activists and politicians across the globe.

For years suspicion and accusations have surrounded Israeli tech company NSO Group and its hacking programme Pegasus. The software installs itself on a target’s smartphone via a text or audio call to a messaging app such as WhatsApp or Telegram.

Then, it turns the target’s phone against them.

It can read messages, record calls, track location, view calendars, contacts and photographs, and even turn on cameras and microphones.

A leaked list of 50,000 potential targets reveals how governments have used it systematically to target political opponents.

NSO’s customers include the right wing, antisemitic government of Hungary, which used the software to target journalists and opposition MPs.

Targets also include the family members of Jamal Khashoggi—the journalist murdered by Saudi

Arabian assassins in 2018.

NSO has always claimed it only sells Pegasus to governments for “legitimate” purposes such as spying on criminals or terrorists. Every sale has to be approved by the Israeli defence ministry.

All this does is point to an even bigger scandal—the relationship between Israel’s private tech industry to the Israeli state, and the governments that back it.

Israeli tech grew out of its military and weapons industry, funded by billions of pounds worth of US military aid.

Such aid is designed to ensure Israel has the military strength it needs to defend the West’s interests in the Middle East.

The military became the motor



**The military became the motor of Israel’s economy**

months’ time. Dominic Cummings also revealed in a BBC interview this week that Boris Johnson blocked tightening Covid-19 restrictions as cases rose last autumn. Johnson thought people dying were “essentially all over 80”.

He had wanted to let coronavirus “wash through the country”, Cummings said.

It’s predominantly younger people who will now face rules that don’t apply to others.

And vaccine passports will restrict people who haven’t had been jabbed. They will

of Israel’s economy on the back of this funding—with an arms industry selling state of the art weaponry and technology.

Quite often this is used by the Israeli military first against Palestinians, then sold to the world as “battle tested”.

This is essential not only to Israel’s economy, but also to its political role as an integral part of US military power. Israeli tech is an offshoot of this.

As with many Israeli cybersecurity companies, NSO’s founders are former members of the army’s elite hacking and surveillance body Unit 8200. As young conscripts, members of Unit 8200 figure out new and inventive ways to spy on Palestinians living under Israel’s military occupation.

When they leave the army many go on to join or found the private cybersecurity companies that are vital for the Israeli state today.

Much of the reporting around the Pegasus scandal agonizes over the “misuse” of the Pegasus software. But the scandal can’t be separated from Israel’s role as the US’s watchdog in the Middle East—and its occupation of Palestine.

# NO TO VACCINE PASSPORTS

BORIS JOHNSON ironically announced on “freedom day” that vaccine passports will soon be required in England.

Anyone who wants to go to a nightclub from the end of September will have to show proof of having received two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine.

“Other venues where large crowds gather” could also be made to adopt the checks.

Johnson did not explain why it is apparently safe to pour into nightclubs now, but a vaccine certificate will be required in two

months’ time. Dominic Cummings also revealed in a BBC interview this week that Boris Johnson blocked tightening Covid-19 restrictions as cases rose last autumn. Johnson thought people dying were “essentially all over 80”.

He had wanted to let coronavirus “wash through the country”, Cummings said.

It’s predominantly younger people who will now face rules that don’t apply to others.

And vaccine passports will restrict people who haven’t had been jabbed. They will

disproportionately affect black and Asian people. Rates for the first vaccination dose were lower among all ethnic minority groups compared to white people.

These are also low among people living in deprived areas, unemployed people and disabled people. Those without the passport can be blamed for the spread of the virus.

This gives the Tories a scapegoat. In reality it is their own fatal failings that are to blame.

We should support vaccination, but oppose vaccine passports.

## Breakfast in



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## ANALYSIS

AMY LEATHER



## The National Food Strategy falls short

**FOOD HAS become deeply politicised. There is growing anger at a food system that badly impacts our health and the environment.**

Many families are struggling to put food on the table. The Trussell Trust reports a record 2.5 million food parcels were given to people in the year leading up to March 2021.

That's the context for last week's publication of the National Food Strategy, authored by restaurateur Henry Dimbleby.

It calls for a £3 billion sugar and salt tax that it hopes will improve our diets.

The idea is that businesses would "reformulate" their products to adjust to the policy. But if this were not possible then the price increase would mean consumers buying less.

It is certainly true that eating too much sugar and salt contributes to poor health. And the food industry is to blame.

Processed foods are the principal source of sugar and salt in people's diets. Some 85 percent of sugar sold in Britain is for manufacturing use and 75 percent of the salt we eat comes from processed foods.

There are vast profits gained from selling foods created from cheap ingredients and produced on a massive scale. Over half the foods consumed in Britain are labelled "ultra-processed".

The whole process of food production destroys much of the flavour and texture of the food, as well as any goodness there may have been. So this needs to be added back in.

But as well as adding flavour, the industry also wants to hide "off flavours" from the manufacturing process. There's a whole industry known as "flavour technology systems" that's devoted to flavourings.

Much of this does indeed come from sugar and salt. These additives are directed at creating "bliss points" where the flavour is optimised to override our natural feeling of being sated.

Proposals that foods can be "reformulated" is not a solution either. Manufacturers already reformulate products. It's not to make them healthy but to make them cheaper, so more profit can be made.

### Industry

There's a chemical industry that advises food manufacturers on how food can be shaped, engineered and re-designed. It means many of our foods have been chemically altered.

For example, ultra-processed cheese is made from milk powder and additives. Some instant noodles are not actual noodles but are based on oils, starch and additives.

Key features of ultra-processed food are a lack of nutritional value, and low proteins, minerals and vitamins whilst being high in calories.

While tackling the amount of sugar and salt is a good place to start, the problem is much broader. The long term impact of chemically altering foods is not fully known, but many studies are showing a negative impact on our health.

The report rightly points out that healthier foods are three times more expensive than processed foods. The poorest 10 percent of English households would need to spend nearly three quarters of their disposable income on food to follow the Eatwell Guide diet.

This compares with the diet costing only 6 percent of the richer households' income.

As the report acknowledges, if the price of some foods were to rise due to a sugar and salt tax then those on low incomes may have even less money to spend on healthy food.

Therefore, it recommends that the money made from the tax should be spent on initiatives such as expanding free school meals and holiday clubs.

But it does not go far enough. All children should be eligible for free school meals.

These should be cooked by trained staff in school kitchens, and not pre-cooked by private companies.

Instead of taxing sugar and salt, why not legislate so only a certain amount can be used, why not ban certain additives? Why not ban junk food advertisements whilst making healthy foods cheaper?

Why not go further and use school kitchens to produce healthy, cheap food for local people to access?

But even these limited changes would require challenging the giant food companies profits—something that the report is unwilling to do.



PROTESTS OVER Jeremy Corbyn's removal as an MP were not taken up by most of the left

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Keir Starmer's left wing purge marks further shift to the right

by NICK CLARK

**AFTER TWO terrible by-election results in Hartlepool, and Batley and Spen, Keir Starmer is trying desperately to rescue his leadership of the Labour Party by turning further to the right.**

Starmer has begun a tour of Britain that involves meeting people who've stopped voting Labour and nodding along to those who come out with right wing views (see box).

Labour MPs and commentators have convinced themselves working class people no longer support Labour because they don't trust left wing politics.

But years of election results show Labour's collapse in support began after Tony Blair became leader, and coincided with its assaults on working class living standards.

Now Starmer hopes "listening" exercises will show Labour is paying attention to the "real concerns" of working class people.

It's all backed up with an assault on left wing activists inside the party.

Starmer was set to begin a purge of left wing Labour members as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday of this week.

He wanted Labour's ruling body, the national executive



Labour Against the Witchhunt

committee, to agree to ban party members from supporting four left wing groups. These are Labour Against the Witchhunt and Resist, who say accusations of antisemitism against the left are politically charged.

It also includes Labour in Exile, which includes people expelled from the party, and the Marxist group Socialist Appeal.

An unnamed Labour "source" told the Mirror newspaper that expulsions are to "get the party back into the decent mainstream of

Labour values." They added, "We need to be fighting to form the next government and that means cleaning out the stable."

In truth, the four small groups have limited influence inside the Labour Party.

But Starmer is clear, he will wage war on the left and drag the party further right.

The Labour left are already in retreat after failing to challenge Jeremy Corbyn's suspension as a Labour MP last year. And swathes of left wing activists have left the party in protest.

Now some Labour MPs are wondering if Starmer's war on the left has reached its limit—and whether they should replace him.

So Starmer wants to appear at the Labour conference in September with a grandstanding show of purging the left.

The four groups have responded by declaring they'll keep fighting inside the Labour Party that's working to expel them.

The rest of the Labour left haven't even promised that. Former shadow chancellor John McDonnell responded by pleading for Corbyn to be restored as a Labour MP.

But even when Corbyn was suspended, left wing Labour MPs refused to rebel to challenge Starmer.

They put the "unity" of the Labour Party ahead of defending themselves and their supporters.

### Starmer insults unemployed

BBC NEWS featured Starmer's meeting with a focus group in Blackpool last week, where he sympathised with right wing views.

Starmer claims he has a "jobs guarantee" for people under 25. But one woman in the focus group—who said she "can't remember" if she ever voted Labour—responded, "Don't waste your money."

"If they want to work, they are already working," she said. "But they're just sitting on their backsides, they don't want to. Because the government are still

paying them to sit on their bums."

Starmer began his reply by agreeing. "You're always going to get some people who maybe don't want a job," he said..

Starmer in Blackpool

# Extinction Rebellion activists convicted

Guilty verdict comes despite interference by the Tory home secretary, reports **Sophie Squire**

**SIX EXTINCTION Rebellion (XR) activists have been convicted for their part in a protest against the right wing press last September.**

The verdict came at the end of a trial that revealed Tory home secretary Priti Patel interfered personally in how the protest was policed.

Judge Sally Fudge found Charlotte Kirin, Caspar Hughes, Laura Frandsen, Amir Jones, Elise Yarde and Hazel Stenson guilty of obstructing a highway.

They had joined a blockade of Newsprinters, which produces papers such as the Daily Mail, the London evening standard, the Sun and the Times.

All of the defendants, excluding Frandsen, were ordered to pay a £150 to the court along with a £22 surcharge. Frandsen's bill was even greater as she has already appeared in court on similar charges.

The protesters erected bamboo structures to block the printing press.

Earlier in the trial, the lawyer for the defence, Raj Chada accused Home secretary Priti Patel of putting significant "political pressure" on the police, on the night of the blockade.

## Contacted

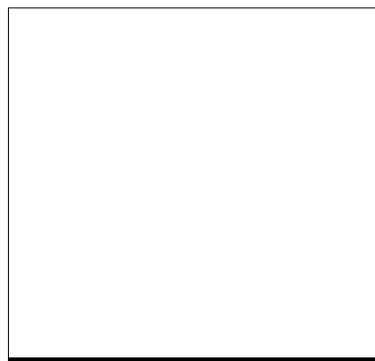
Patel contacted both chief constable Constable Charlie Hall and Assistant Chief Constable Matt Nicholls during the night of 5 September 2020. Neither noted down the conversation.

Chada argued that this should mean that the defendants should be acquitted due to interference from the home secretary.

But judge Fudge said that the police had "maintained their operational independence".

She said that the "level of disruption caused by the protest was high, and the obstruction of the highway went on for a very long time."

"In my view the protesters had, up until the point of arrest, been able to exercise their article 10 and 11 rights with little, if any, interference from the state, and that part



**Priti Patel—rang top cops**

of the protest had already had some impact on Newsprinters' ability to conduct its business in the usual way," she said.

XR responded that it was "astonished that judge Fudge ruled there was no political interference in the police operation despite overwhelming evidence."

It said in a statement, "Priti Patel contacted the police frequently throughout the night and demanded the early removal of protesters. We suspect under pressure from fossil fuels investing climate-delayer Rupert Murdoch. History will decide where the real guilt lies."

"XR will continue to demand that the press tell the truth about the climate and ecological emergency."

This is the second trial of the 81 activists who were arrested at two press blockades on 5 September. The first trial saw the defendants acquitted.

## Exposed

But unlike the first, this trial exposed Priti Patel for interfering with police procedures to arrest protesters.

Now activists could potentially be handed a £1,000 fine for their part in the blockade.

The government and the state want to punish for environmental activists. The best response is to defy them and join XR's rebellion starting in London on 23 August.

Go to [extinctionrebellion.uk/event/rebellion](https://extinctionrebellion.uk/event/rebellion) for info and updates on the August rebellion

**ACTIVISTS IN a bamboo frame outside the printing press during the protest last year**

## FIRE AND REHIRE

# Fight any rotten deal to end this crucial strike at JDE coffee plant

By **PAT CARMODY**

THE UNITE union and coffee giant Jacobs Douwe Egberts (JDE) are thought to have reached a deal after two months of rolling strikes by workers.

There will now be a ballot on the offer with Unite recommending acceptance.

Almost 300 workers at the plant in Banbury, Oxfordshire, have fought courageously against outrageous attacks from the bosses.

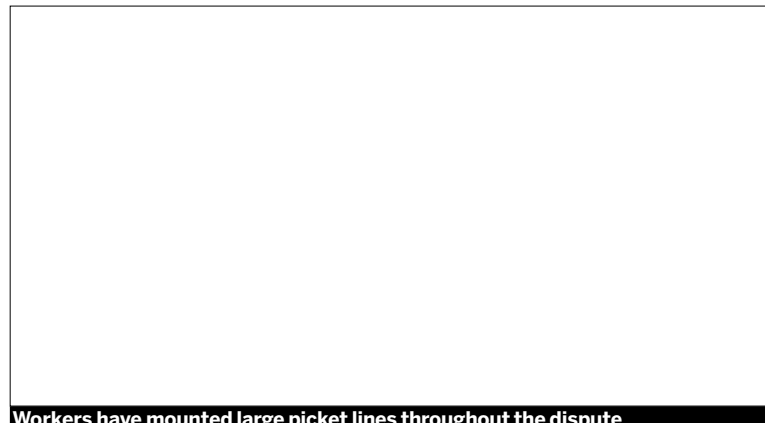
But, according to a number of JDE strikers, what's now proposed is not the deal that they fought so hard for. Unite is keeping the details confidential while it communicates with its members.

## Cuts

But it appears that the deal contains the pay cuts and major attacks on shift patterns that workers at JDE have been resisting.

It also looks as though 23 workers will be made redundant.

If this is the case, this would be a major setback for workers at the plant, and the struggle against fire and rehire.



**Workers have mounted large picket lines throughout the dispute**

And it could have been so different.

Antiquated machinery at the plant meant it took at least a few days to get production running again after just one strike day.

Hundreds of tonnes of coffee were lost in production as a result.

With the bosses using a thinly-veiled threat of closure, the workers were determined not to be blackmailed.

Many workers on some of the fantastic pickets and protests outside the factory said that they

would rather the plant close than accept those rotten contracts.

Even now the workers could win.

Workers should vote no to the deal and pressure union officials to use some of the union's much-vaunted £40 million war chest to support an all-out indefinite strike.

There should also be calls for support from the wider workers' movement and from JDE workers internationally.

That could beat the bosses' fire and rehire weapon.



## South African activists speak out

**S'BU ZIKODE, a leading member of the shack dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo, spoke to Socialist Worker about the factors behind the riots.**

"At the beginning, we see the work of the Zuma people.

"By the Zuma people, I do not mean those ordinary voters or African National Congress members who backed him at some point.

"I mean the former members of the ANC's armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe, and those in the state security agencies linked to Zuma.

"They have tried to show that if they are removed from control, then the country will be on fire. A war within the ruling party has burst forth.

"We can also see some police have allowed burning of factories and shopping malls. When we have protests there are police everywhere, armoured vehicles, all the means of repression. But we have seen police stand aside because they are supporters of Zuma.

"However, the majority of looting has nothing to do with Zuma. It is because people are hungry.

"Abahlali baseMjondolo has always warned that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. We have warned again and again that we are sitting on a ticking time bomb.

"We have warned for too long that people cannot continue to live in terrible poverty only to be ignored year after year. We have made it clear that people will not allow their humanity to be vandalised forever. For too long we have been explaining that we are ruled with violence and that the public, the middle and upper classes, often accept this by their silence.

"The elites have always ignored the poor. They do not see us. When the riots happened suddenly the poor were before their eyes.

"Abahlali has no illusions about Zuma. When he was president 18 of our activists were assassinated. His people looted the state to enrich themselves.

"But we also do not see president Ramaphosa as the answer.

"The last week must be a turning point. It cannot be business as usual after this. It is a rupture that demands a new way forward.

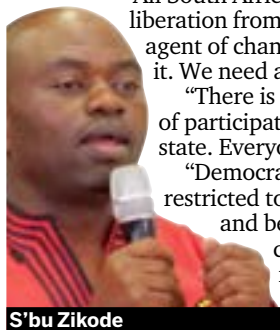
"The ANC cannot clear this mess. The ruling party is not the solution.

"All South Africans should thank it for its role in liberation from apartheid, but it is no longer an agent of change. We cannot put our hopes into it. We need a voice from below.

"There is a profound question of democracy, of participation and trust. We do not trust the state. Everyone sees politicians as liars.

"Democracy has been privatised and become restricted to a few. It must be opened up again and become the property of all. You cannot solve such issues with the military.

"We need radical policies and to rethink our whole approach."



S'bu Zikode

## We have to mobilise to defend migrants

**LUCAS is from the Katilehong township near Johannesburg**

"In our section of the township, people were saying this is our chance to drive out the foreigners. There are Zimbabweans here who have come looking for work and safety. There is a man near me who has come from Congo.

"People say that such foreigners are taking our jobs and our money, or that they are all criminals. It is very dangerous.

"Sometimes government ministers say things like this too. And that makes it worse.

"But I do not believe these people from other countries are our enemies. I do not think we should turn on other Africans and blame them for our poverty.

"Last week some of us stood outside the shacks of the foreigners and said we would defend them. People listen to us because we have stood up for the people against the council, against the police, against gangsters.

"In time, those who wanted to drive out the foreigners went away."

**RIOTERS AND looters set infrastructure alight following the jailing of former president Jacob Zuma**

## South Africa riots—a result of decades of poverty

**Charlie Kimber argues the looting and riots in South Africa are due to a lack of fundamental change since the fall of apartheid**

**AN EXPLOSION of rage swept across large parts of South Africa last week.**

Thousands of the poorest people in the country rioted and looted shopping centres and warehouses.

The revolt began last weekend in KwaZulu-Natal province, centred on the city of Durban. Then it spread to Johannesburg and the surrounding Gauteng province.

Next there was major looting in two other provinces—Mpumalanga, just east of Gauteng, and Northern Cape.

It was triggered by protests for former president Jacob Zuma, who had been jailed. There is strong evidence of a plan to create chaos that would allow Zuma's faction to return to office.

But it quickly became about much more—most of those involved have no interest in Zuma or politicians at the top of society.

### Emptying

Duduzile lives in the northern Johannesburg township of Alexandra. She told Socialist Worker, "I am 40 years old and I have never seen anything like this. People were emptying the shops. It was a free for all.

"For many it was a delight. At last there was food and other things. There are no jobs, we are hungry, our children and elders are hungry.

"Coronavirus has meant



Former president Jacob Zuma

deaths, and we are poorer than ever during the lockdowns.

"The looting started with young people, but then there were many older people.

"Most of the time people are taking simple things—rice, cooking oil, vegetables. But then there is also the chance for things you dream of—a proper bed, a fan, a fridge or something nice to wear.

"Now the police are very heavy, shooting rubber bullets at people and firing tear gas. I think there will be a lot of punishment and I am frightened about jobs in the future and whether all the businesses will now go."

In several provinces the government sent thousands of soldiers to back up the police.

At least 212 people died during riots.

Various "community groups" set up defence groups. Some were made of mostly armed white

people worried about their properties. Others were organised by black-owned business people.

Some were formed of ordinary people who wanted to protect their homes.

At the root of what's happened is desperate poverty. An official analysis says the overall rate of unemployment is over 43 percent.

As a result millions of people live in substandard housing with no food security. Even those with a job are often on poverty pay.

At the end of April the government withdrew the Covid-19 relief grant, even though lockdowns have continued in some sectors.

Although it was only £17.50 a month, it was a lifeline to many people.

### Benefits

And increases in other benefits also stopped.

Sifiso lives in Umlazi township near Durban. He told Socialist Worker, "It has been such a hard year and a half. There is real suffering, with far more deaths from the virus than official figures show. And very bad retrenchments—job losses.

"Poor people saw a chance to take food but also some of the goods they see in the shops but cannot afford, or hope ever to afford.

"The supporters of Zuma have been trying to show

society will fall apart if their man is jailed. But there is a much bigger context to what has happened."

President Cyril Ramaphosa said the looting was "opportunistic criminality".

But he was also forced to admit, "This moment has thrown into stark relief what we already knew. The level of unemployment, poverty, and inequality in our society is unsustainable."

It is unsustainable. But Ramaphosa and his African National Congress predecessors in office have presided over decades of poverty while boosting businesses.

The looting is a symptom of the lack of change.

Looting is not the same as an organised working class movement. Targets of looting have included vaccination centres and health centres.

There are ugly features. Some of those involved are pushing xenophobia against black, immigrant workers.

In some areas there have been ethnic confrontations where one section of poor people targeted another.

Groups fought against such divisions. But the prime responsibility for such acts lies with those who create the poverty that fuels them.

It is right to revolt.

A working class solution means organising for revolution against the rich and the politicians who support them.

## Keep up battle for safe cranes

CAMPAIGNERS recently held a silent vigil for June Harvey. She was killed when a 20-metre crane crashed through the roof of her house on 8 July last year.

Twelve months on, the family whose lives have been turned upside down still have no idea of what went wrong.

The Construction Safety Campaign has campaigned for 25 years for better crane safety and for 15 years with the Battersea Crane Disaster Action Group.

In Battersea, in 2006, crane driver, Jonathan Cloke and a member of the public, Michael Alexa were killed when a crane collapsed. Shamefully, it took ten years for the case to come to court.

Concerted campaigning by these groups led to new legislation in 2010. The registration of cranes was then law.

But prime minister David Cameron and the Conservative Government scrapped the law in 2013.

Cameron referred to his desire to “kill off health and safety culture for good.”

A one-third funding cut to the Health and Safety Executive led to fewer safety inspections, enforcements and prosecutions.

Since 2000 there have been deaths or serious injuries due to crane collapses in Canary Wharf, Worthing, Liverpool, Croydon, Forset Hill, Blackwall and in Crewe.

We need a massive improvement in crane safety so that no one else is killed.

**C Stoll**

Halesowen, West Midlands



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Now the climate change horrors are coming home

THE HORRIFIC effects of climate change have been growing for years.

Maybe now it is obviously taking place in the United States and Europe more of us will have to take notice.

The most callous people at the top might have consoled themselves that it would only be the poor of the Global South who suffered from environmental collapse.

But now it's everywhere, and getting worse.

Last week severe flooding in Germany and Belgium left at least 100 people dead, with dozens of others missing.

Swift-moving water from swollen rivers surged through

cities and villages in three western German states.

In Belgium the regional authorities ordered the nearly 200,000 inhabitants of Liege to evacuate the city.

The storms and resulting high water also battered Switzerland and the Netherlands.

It's the worse flooding for decades, and is clearly linked to the extreme weather patterns that are caused by climate change.

Yet nobody is taking real action.

Instead, we have terrifying revelations such as the fact that the Amazon rainforest is now emitting more carbon dioxide than it is able to absorb.

It's putting out a billion tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, when

previously it had been a carbon sink. What had been reducing the climate crisis before is now speeding it up.

Most of the emissions are caused by fires, many deliberately set to clear land for soy and beef production.

That's encouraged by the Jair Bolsonaro government. But he is not the only one.

I blame all the leaders of the G7 who gathered recently in Britain.

During the pandemic there has been a loss of momentum over climate mobilisations.

Now it's time to get back on to the streets, because if we don't then we don't have a future.

**Sheila Atkinson**

Leeds

## Debates about French battle against fascism

THE ARTICLE on France (Socialist Worker, 14 July) was basically right, but gave a strange view of France Insoumise (FI—France in Revolt or France Unbowed).

The huge anti-fascist initiative in over 100 towns last month did not come from nowhere. It was set into motion by the FI.

And in this last year FI leader Jean-Luc Melenchon has been permanently attacked because of his loud defence of Muslims.

Like the rest of the the French left, FI has much progress to make on fighting

Islamophobia. But big steps have been taken.

Given that the FI got seven million votes at the 2017 elections, this is important to stress.

**John Mullen**  
Montreuil, France

■ I AM concerned by the possibility of a neo-fascist as French president.

There has to be a single left/green candidate to keep Marine Le Pen out of the second round of voting. It's time to put differences aside.

**Helen McCartney**  
South London

## Rising inflation means action is needed

WORKERS NEED to wake up about soaring price rises.

Official figures last week showed that the RPI measure of inflation reached 3.9 percent in June.

This was up a long way from 3.3 percent in May.

The CPI measure that the government prefers also jumped to 2.5 percent.

To be clear, this means that if your pay does not go up by 3 percent or more then you are facing a cut.

That will mean increased hardship for millions of private sector and public sector workers facing pay

freezes. I have no doubt that there are many trade union leaders who accept that people are “lucky to have a job” at the moment.

We can expect them to put in a pay claim, do very little to campaign for



Pay is a vital issue

the action needed to win it, and then blame the members if a rotten deal goes through. Perhaps the first big chance to drive through a pay fight will come in the health service.

But I don't have much trust in the union leaders to direct that.

In every workplace I think union reps have to start now to explain what rising inflation means.

Speeches about “we won't pay for the crisis of the pandemic” will be empty if there isn't pay action.

**Barbara Rosman**  
West London

Just a thought...

## App is a sign, not a cause

I WAS surprised to see the Unite union joining bosses' calls for action to stop “too many” people being sent home from work because they have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19.

Steve Turner, candidate for general secretary, said, “It is not an exaggeration to say factories are on the verge of shutting”. Sorry, that's because cases are soaring.

The attention should be on demanding safety measures, not on assisting firms to keep people working when it's dangerous.

**Paula Newall**  
Liverpool

## Are identity cards next?

THE USE of “vaccine certification” is spreading. We will be expected to produce evidence of our jobs if we attend almost any public event.

I support vaccination, but I fear that “produce your papers” is going to become a chance for the government to move towards identity cards by stealth.

Don't give up even more of our rights.

**Alison George**  
Birmingham

## Sir Keir does not know law

LABOUR LEADER Keir Starmer has just held a two-day visit to Northern Ireland.

While there he was asked what he would do if he was prime minister and there were a vote on Irish unity.

He said he would campaign for the north to remain because, he says, “I believe in the United Kingdom”.

Doesn't he know the Good Friday agreement says the state must be neutral in such a vote? Not much of a lawyer.

**Len Michaels**  
Edinburgh

## Aid cuts are so shameful

THE TORIES are so cruel. The cuts in foreign aid will have terrible consequences for the world's poorest.

The money saved is just pennies compared to the whole budget.

**Henry Lee**  
On Twitter



**PROTECTED BY miles of barbed wire fences and tens of thousands of tooled up cops, leaders of the world's most powerful states gathered in Genoa, Italy, 20 years ago.**

Outside, hundreds of thousands of raging protesters fought furiously to tear them down. It was a defining moment in the anti-capitalist movement that had swept the globe.

Politicians at the G8 summit that year pretended they were to discuss eliminating poverty and “Third World” debt. In reality, they would agree among themselves more of the measures—the business deals, privatisation schemes and loans—behind such extreme poverty in the first place.

Their system and their profit-seeking scheming made them killers. And the protesters outside knew it.

Some 300,000 defied police restrictions and took to the streets to wreck the summit. Their scale and militancy terrified the ruling class but inspired millions of workers globally.

It was a huge escalation of a new anti-capitalist movement that started in Seattle, US. Then, mass protests targeted and blockaded the World Trade Organisation conference in 1999.

In anticipation of protests targeting the summit, the state closed streets, created a Red Zone that was out of bounds for non-residents and set up huge military hardware.

The Italian government also suspended freedom of movement across their borders for the duration of the summit. They monitored the movement of many protesters arriving internationally.

Veronique who attempted to travel from France told Socialist Worker, “Me and my friends arrived at the train station for our departure, but loads of trains were being delayed, redirected or even cancelled because of the protests, we never made it.”

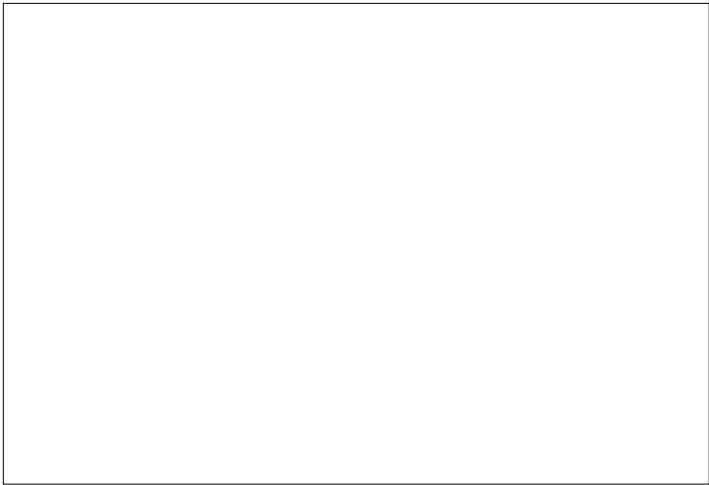
The first demonstration on 18 July was in solidarity with refugees. It attracted 50,000 people—far more than organisers had anticipated.

Over the next two days, various political parties and campaigns marched towards the “Red Zone” surrounding the summit, guarded with water cannons and armed soldiers.

The police beat back protesters with batons and huge amounts of tear gas. Groups who converged on the Red Zone that day included thousands of Italian activists dressed in padded white overalls to protect them from police batons.

There was also a large contingent of organisations in the International Socialist Tendency, including the Socialist Workers Party from Britain.

The demonstrations were so powerful that they forced the rulers at the G8 to



**Riots cops charge past the body of Carlo Giuliani who they have just shot and killed** (above) **Genoa was flooded with tooled up cops** (below)

cancel their formal dinner. Tony Blair, then British prime minister, attacked the demonstrations as an “anarchists’ travelling circus”.

Amid the brutality 23 year old Carlo Giuliani was shot dead by riot police. His body was then run over by a riot van.

This enraged the protesters and motivated 300,000 people to march the following day. Socialists, trade unionists, students, communists and Italian workers stood in solidarity.

Filling the suburban car parks, hundreds of buses had arrived from across Europe.

Local residents handed out water, applauded from their balconies and hung out underwear in defiance of government orders to not air laundry during the summit.

Outside of Genoa, protests gathered at almost 50 Italian police stations, with 50,000 marching in Milan.

There were militant protests in Germany, Greece and Switzerland over Giuliani’s killing. In Hamburg, Germany, taxi drivers drove in a cavalcade through the city in solidarity with the Genoa protesters.

The police, although massively outnumbered, attacked the Genoa demonstration, arresting hundreds and injuring many more. But the protest went on undeterred.

It sent a shiver down the spine of the ruling class. They responded with violence the next day.

In the early hours of the morning cops brutally attacked the Armando Diaz school where many prominent activists were sleeping.

Cops shouted, “We’re going to kill you,” and attacked people still in their sleeping bags.

An interior ministry source admitted the raid turned into a revenge attack by police.

Socialist Worker at the time reported, “Peaceful protesters suffered repeated vicious assaults which left the walls and floors of the school running with blood.”

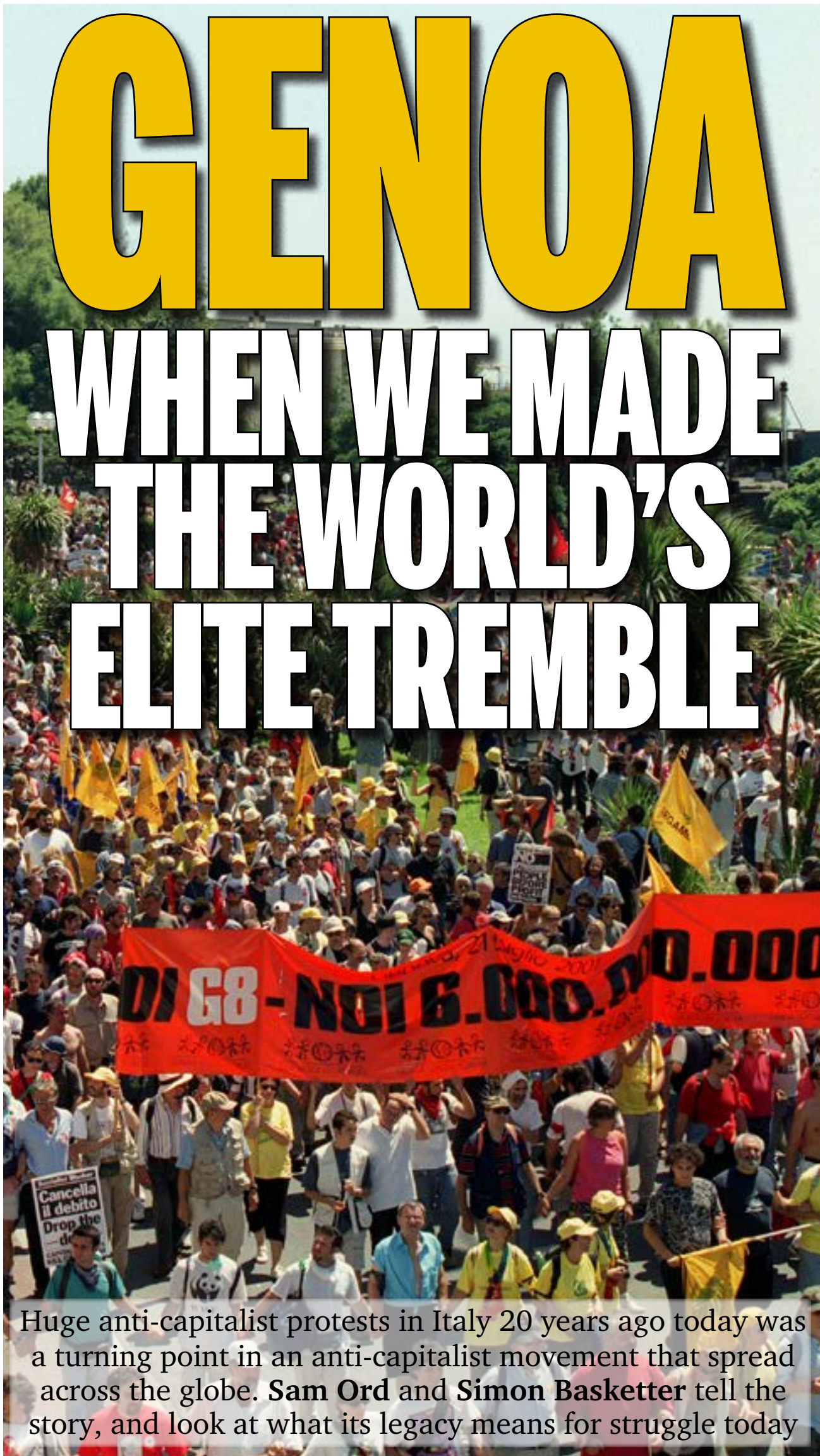
People were carried out stretchers whilst handcuffed, their clothes were covered in blood. People were arrested while cops’ attacks continued.

Vittorio Agnoletto of the Genoa Social Forum said, “I am a doctor, I saw injuries consistent with intent to administer as much pain as possible.

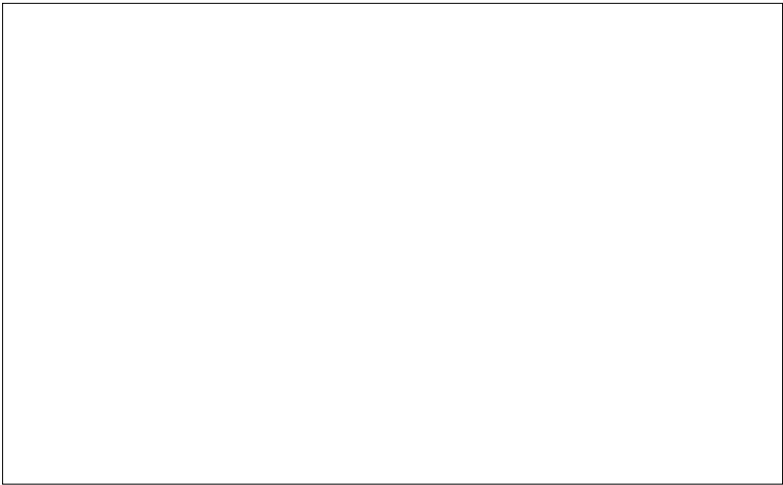
“He (the hospital’s director) said two people had traumas and compression, one man was paralysed down one side of his body and two men were unconscious.”

The attack outlined the state brutality capitalists rely on. It also showed how much of a serious threat mass, radical protests are.

The protests dominated the Genoa G8 summit and gave confidence to mass anti-capitalists revolts around the world.



Huge anti-capitalist protests in Italy 20 years ago today was a turning point in an anti-capitalist movement that spread across the globe. **Sam Ord** and **Simon Basketter** tell the story, and look at what its legacy means for struggle today



## Debating how to fight and how to win

THE GENOA protests came after some two decades of the spread of neoliberalism—the idea that unrestrained, free market policies is the best way to run the system.

Working class people globally had suffered harsh cuts to services, unemployment and rising living costs. Meanwhile, multinational companies were given tax breaks and handouts by western states.

And some 800 million people across the world didn’t have a reliable source of clean drinking water and the divide between rich and poor was widening.

Genoa led a wave of anti-capitalist movements and protests across Europe. Big protests against police brutality continued in many Italian cities and towns in the following weeks attracting tens of thousands

A year later almost 100,000 people gathered in Florence for the European Social Forum conference. The gathering subsequently organised a one million strong demonstration against the US and Britain’s imperialist invasion of Iraq.

Also that year millions of workers participated in a general strike and huge protests in Spain. People opposed neoliberal policies and the reform of unemployment benefits.

Activists understood how multinational companies with the support of governments were the main force destroying people’s lives. This segued into people opposing arms companies profiting from imperialist wars.

Italian and British activists who had initially cooperated to organise the Genoa G8 protests called for an international day of protest against war.

On 15 February 2003, two million people marched in London, 700,000 in

Rome and up to two million in Madrid. Some 16 million people in 60 countries protested against war that weekend.

Genoa was a turning point in the fight against neoliberalism and laid the foundation for the subsequent anti-imperialist movements to grow.

Many people leading up to Genoa felt frustrated by the “traditional left.”

But on the night of the murder of Carlo Giuliani, Vittorio Agnoletto of the Genoa Social Forum, and Fausto Bertinotti, leader of Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), appeared on television and called on people to join the demonstration.

It was an important symbol of coming together and it made a difference.

The protest in Genoa forced a re-think among the left in Italy. The White Overalls, whose tactic of padding up against police batons had run its course in the face of brutality, dissolved, reformed and looked for new initiatives.

And Rifondazione Comunista (PRC) party threw itself into becoming the “party of the movements”.

The protests against the gathering of bosses continued but the discussions of alternatives to the elite became seen as more urgent.

There were tensions at both ends of the new movement.

In both the reformist and revolutionary left an ideology grew around social movements. This included the idea that movements flourished without the involvement of political parties. Parties were formally banned from the social forums for instance.

In fact, parties had played a central role in organising the protests in Genoa alongside autonomists and activists not involved in any organisation.

But it is also the case that being the

“party of the movements” was a double edged weapon. Being more political could mean pulling the movements back to the electoral system defending politics it had grown by appearing to reject.

So the social centres, which formed a mass movement at this stage in Italy, allied themselves with the left. To some extent the unity forged provided a new electoral base for the left.

But the PRC’s Bertinotti led his party back to the right to the extent of participating in a pro-war, centre-left government in 2006-7.

The withdrawal of Italian troops from Iraq was not accompanied by an abandonment of the “war on terror” or a withdrawal of Italian soldiers from Afghanistan. Promised social reforms never happened.

This threw the social forum activists into disarray and the Italian anti-war movement collapsed. Networks of local organisation withered.

A right wing government led by Silvio Berlusconi was elected in 2008.

Struggle and resistance did not stop. Car workers struck. A militant student movement generated a wave of opposition to university reforms. Anti-privatisation and social movements defeated Berlusconi in referendums.

The left has not recovered but instead repeated the mistakes of 2006.

Working class struggle failed to rise to the same level as the ideological questioning of the system. That created a gap. Unfortunately on the back of the great anti-capitalist mobilisations the left filled it by taking the movement back to a parliamentary dead end.

The lesson of Genoa is the power to challenge the system lies in huge movements of working class struggle.

**Over 300,000 marched** (main) **standing up to police violence** (above left) **The Interntional Socialist Tendency** (above right) **and others** (below) **marching on the red zone**



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

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To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

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We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602

# Socialist Workers Party online meetings

**A PROTESTER is arrested in Havana last week**

## Revolt in Cuba Imperialism and austerity

**CARDIFF**  
Wed 28 July, 7.30pm  
630-181-4857

**LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE**  
Thu 29 July, 7pm  
992-204-9372

**WIGAN**  
Thu 29 July, 7pm  
872-5136-9540

### BIRMINGHAM

**A rebel's guide to Frida Kahlo**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

281-634-5938

### BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

**What is Zionism?**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

914-9548-1031

### BRADFORD

**France — Macron, racism and Islamophobia**

Thu 29 July, 7.30pm

885-9187-7552

### BRIGHTON & HOVE

**Stonewall was a riot! The radical roots of Pride**

Thu 29 July, 6.30pm

874-3262-3749

### BRISTOL

**Socialists and the united front**

Thu 29 July, 7.30pm

688-397-3148

### BURNLEY & PENDLE

**The world turned upside down — the English Revolution**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

446-409-5118

### CAMBRIDGE

**How do we make the unions fight?**

Thu 29 July,

7.30pm

681-800-4408

### CHESTERFIELD

**Can there be a progressive patriotism?**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

828-532-8731

### COVENTRY

**The role of imperialism in Palestine**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

823-945-1917

### DEVON & CORNWALL

**Can music change the world?**

Thu 5 Aug, 7.30pm

865-2972-2883

### DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

**Why do people believe in conspiracies?**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

894-2628-7708

### EAST MIDLANDS

**Booklaunch: Mindshift — how culture transformed the human brain**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

354-874-4790

### EDINBURGH

**Transgender resistance, socialism and the fight for liberation**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

431-459-112

### GLASGOW

**When workers fight for the environment**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

879-2402-3259

### HARLOW

**Is this democracy? People, parliament and power**

Thu 29 July, 7.30pm

832-8746-7480

### HOME COUNTIES

**Another education is possible**

Thu 29 July, 6.30pm

872-4922-1957

### HUDDERSFIELD

**How can art help change the world?**

Wed 28 July, 6.30pm

290-168-1804

### KENT

**Crisis in the NHS — privatisation, pay and pandemics**

Thu 29 July, 8.15pm

434-623-8064

### LEEDS

**Why do people believe in conspiracies?**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

881-4770-0676

### LIVERPOOL

**Another education is possible**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

493-925-5919

### LONDON: HACKNEY

**Can the economy bounce back?**

Thu 29 July, 7.30pm

854-8245-8715

### LONDON: HARINGEY

**100 years since Partition — can there be a united Ireland?**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

459-388-1576

### LONDON: ISLINGTON

**From Palestine to Covid — why is the media so biased?**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

874-012-7970

### LONDON: NEWHAM

**Can the British economy bounce back from Covid?**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

288-098-8827

### LONDON: SOUTH

**Anger to revolution — what makes people rise up?**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

497-196-1801

### LONDON: SOUTH EAST

**Why the working class is the most revolutionary class**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

529-913-6390

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

**Alienation — why we don't like Mondays**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

818-391-0420

### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

**How do we decolonise the curriculum?**

Wed 28 July, 7.30pm

543-023-057

### LONDON: WEST AND NORTHWEST

**A rebel's guide to Frida Kahlo**

Thu 29 July, 7.30pm

816-2991-5859

### MANCHESTER

**Can Biden put the US back together again?**

Wed 28 July, 7.15pm

323-178-7151

### NEWCASTLE

**Indigenous sovereignty and working class struggle in Canada**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

368-595-2712

### NORWICH

**France — Macron, racism and Islamophobia**

Wed 28 July,

7.30pm

906-652-5299

### OXFORD & THAMES VALLEY

**State and revolution**

Wed 28 July, 7pm

861-2001-6477

### PORTSMOUTH

**Why the Cop process has failed to tackle climate change**

Wed 28 July,

7.30pm

488-934-2809

### SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

**Trans rights, sport and the fight for liberation**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

528-174-9278

### SOUTHAMPTON

**Another education is possible**

Wed 28 July,

7.30pm

381-513-5080

### SWANSEA & WEST WALES

**Why capitalism drives the environmental crisis**

Thu 29 July, 7pm

902-964-963

### YORK & SCARBOROUGH

**Let's talk about sex — Marxism and sexual liberation**

Wed 28 July,

7.30pm

827-489-7492

## BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



**The Labour Party — a Marxist History**  
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein and Charlie



**Breaking Up the British State—Scotland, Independence and Socialism, £12**



**Does privilege explain racism?** by Esme Choonara, Ken Olende, Yuri Prasad and Weyman Bennett, £3



**Transgender Resistance**  
by Laura Miles

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# Anger out of fear—the New Cross Fire remembered

A documentary by director Steve McQueen remembers the black-led revolts of 1981—beginning with rage at the New Cross fire, writes **Harold Wilson**

**“CHILDREN HAVE been burned. Not West Indians. Black British! That is what I want said. They’re burning our children. Why hasn’t Parliament said anything?”**

So rang out the voice of community campaigner Sybil Phoenix demanding answers to the death of thirteen young black people at a house party in south east London forty years ago.

It’s the opening sequence to Steve McQueen’s brilliant, absorbing documentary film, *Fire*.

*Fire* is the first in a three-part series, *Uprising*, showing on BBC1 this week.

The first chronicles the New Cross Fire of 1981, the second the fire’s aftermath and the third film recounts the Brixton revolt from that same year.

All three are compulsive and devastating in turn. There’s wonderful era-setting footage that handsomely frame the films.

*Fire* is masterful in its story-telling, seamlessly moving between detailed personal reflections and that of a wider social backdrop of the late 1970s.

The survivors’ testimony is harrowing and in parts graphic. Through the smoke Wayne Haynes staggered to a window and began a desperate descent down a drain pipe.

But it came away from the wall and he went crashing through the roof of an outside lavatory.

His leg ended up lodged in his chest and he sustained multiple fractures. He survived. He was just 16.

Some people jumped from the top floor and second floor windows, hoping they’d avoid the iron spiked railings below in the basement of the Georgian terraced house.

## Ghetto

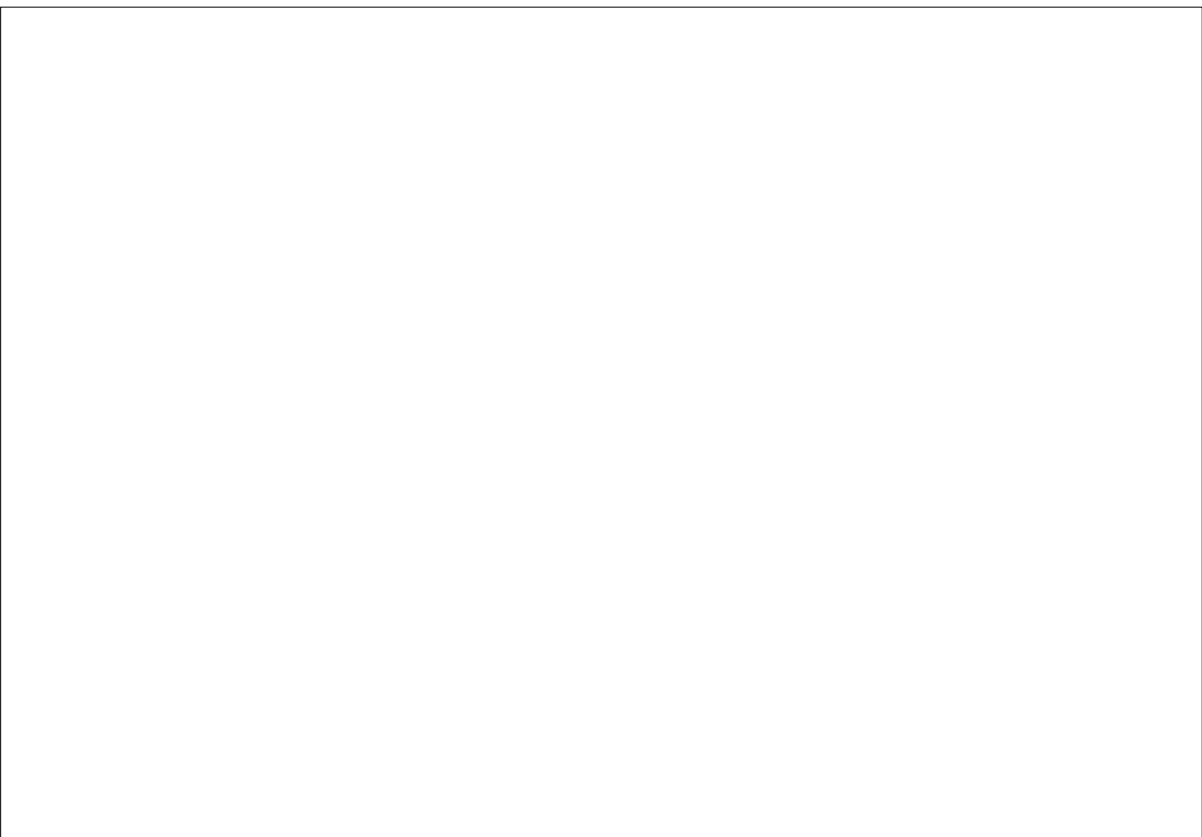
Wayne recalled New Cross in the late 1970s which he styled “a ghetto”, a neighbourhood with an overbearing police presence. Cops would mete out assaults and beatings on the street or back at the station.

It wasn’t the loveliest of places. Much of the public housing stock was a concentrated knit of unforgiving concrete high-rise blocks and maisonettes.

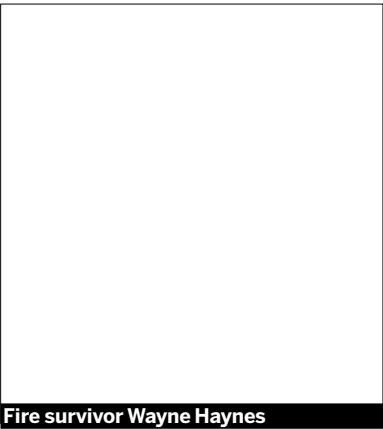
“Muggings” had become newspaper shorthand for exclusively black criminality, particularly where the victims were white women.

The reality was, as teacher and Lewisham councillor Russell Proffitt points out from a footage interview, “the black community is simply a convenient scapegoat for society’s ills”.

In the summer of 1977 the police smashed down 21 front doors in dawn raids in an arrest spree, seeking



A PROTEST in the wake of the New Cross fire



Fire survivor Wayne Haynes

21 “mugging” suspects. The Nazi National Front took the racist bait.

Its attempted march through Lewisham and New Cross in August 1977—and the resistance to it—is now celebrated anti-fascist history.

The footage and accounts in the film are a treat—the noise, the numbers, the smoke bombs, the rock hurling black youths and retreating cops.

You get a real sense of the scale of numbers involved in halting fascist marches particularly in the face of massive police protection.

In the wake of glory at Lewisham a rash of highly suspect arson attacks occurred. The Moonshot, a youth club immensely popular with black

youngsters and situated in the heart of New Cross, was torched. Within seven months the Albany Empire Theatre in neighbouring Deptford was set ablaze shortly after hosting plays with a racial harmony theme.

Radical and black bookshops had become targets too.

Wayne maintains that the fire that took hold at 439 New Cross Road was a racist payback for the triumph at Lewisham.

It’s a link impossible to substantiate. Besides, simply ignoring the National Front threat would not have quelled fascist advance in the Britain of the late 1970s.

In *Blame*, the fallout of the fire comes under scrutiny and in particular police misinformation and scheming, newspaper collusion and establishment silence.

## Harrowing

The photos taken by forensics of the gutted interior of the house are particularly harrowing.

And it’s great credit to McQueen’s production team that they diligently revisited the contested accounts of how the fire started.

Wayne Hayes pulls back the sleeve of his top to expose to the camera the charred skin he still bears from 1981.

Black anger over the indifference to

the deaths was vast. It was reflected in the turnout at public meetings.

Activists, including the Race Today collective conducted their own investigations and took testimonies.

A joint committee was formed and a Black People’s Day for Justice March was called.

It attracted 20,000 protesters in March 1981.

## Wrath

The wrath of *Frontline*, the final episode, had been coming.

Police harassment, particularly the racist application of “sus” laws was the fuse that sparked an uprising in Brixton that summer, 1981.

Many other cities in England revolted too.

It is impossible to think the BBC would have commissioned *Uprising* without the swelling injustice challenged by the Black Lives Matter movement.

McQueen’s *Uprising* is a rich chronicle of Britain 40 years ago which still resonates strongly today.

*Uprising* is on BBC1, 9pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week and then on BBC iplayer



**More online**  
The Brixton Uprising  
[bit.ly/SWBrixton](http://bit.ly/SWBrixton)

## FILM

### NIGHT OF THE KINGS

Out in cinemas and streaming on Friday 23 July. Go to [altitude.film](http://altitude.film)

**THIS STRANGE**, folk-tale like fantasy prison thriller might be unlike any film you’ve seen before.

A young petty criminal from the slums of Abidjan, the Ivory Coast, is shoved into the weird world of the Maca prison.

In this fictional version of the real-life jail, the jail is all but run by the prisoners themselves according to seemingly complex folk traditions, customs and laws.

Through these, power struggles between the prisoners play out.

Change is coming and everyone is restless waiting for it.

Prisoner-boss Blackbeard is dying, and his challenger, Lass, wants to run things differently, though not better.

The prison has to be “managed more rationally,” he says.

“The prisoners must stop being our slaves and become our customers.”

In a desperate bid to hold off the inevitable, Blackbeard appoints the new prisoner the “Roman”—who has to tell a story all through the night or be killed.

Like the film itself, Roman mixes real life with folk tale, to tell the story of notorious slum criminal Zama King—spanning Ivory Coast history and merging real life coups with ancient legends.

**Nick Clark**

## TOP 5 BOOKS

- Breaking Up the British State**  
Fotheringham, Sherry, Bryce (eds)
- 32 Counties: the Failure of Partition and the Case for a United Ireland**  
Kieran Allen
- Transgender Resistance**  
Laura Miles
- Rebellious Daughters of History**  
Judy Cox
- A Rebel’s Guide to George Orwell**  
John Newsinger

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**T**HE streets of Cuba have seen protests in recent weeks. Poverty and the impact of the Covid pandemic have prompted many to direct their anger towards the Cuban government.

Others have mobilised to defend it.

The history of Cuba provides us with vital lessons. It shows the vicious nature of US intervention—and how it can be beaten back.

Cuba is an inspiring example of how people can fight against imperialism and for national liberation. But it is not a model of socialism.

Spain was the first imperialist power to seize the land now known as Cuba in the late 1400s. The indigenous population, the Ciboney Taino, who lived there were displaced and enslaved by the colonisers.

The US and Spain battled over Cuba throughout the 1800s until 1898 when Spain was forced to give up the island.

Cuba declared independence in 1902, but it remained under the effective control of the US through the Platt Amendment.

One clause of this amendment gave the US the now notorious Guantanamo torture base on the island.

From then on the US had a big role in running Cuba. It would effectively choose its presidents and send troops to smash any resistance.

This led to a period of political instability. Taking advantage of the situation, military officer Fulgencio Batista took power and became the country's president from 1940 to 1944.

**F**ACING electoral defeat in 1952, Batista orchestrated a military coup and installed himself as a dictator, backed by the US.

Batista worked with the US, the mafia and sections of local capital to set up a corrupt regime that was playground for the rich and of horror for ordinary people.

By the end of the 1950s the city of Havana had 270 brothels.

Large sections of the working class, the peasantry and even some capitalists opposed Batista's rule.

He wrecked ordinary people's lives, but also held back the growth of a locally-owned business sector.

Without a social base, Batista relied on the police and the army to crush dissent. This alone was not enough to withstand the forces rallying against him.

In July 1953, a small group of revolutionaries came together from the more radical elements of the left wing

populist Ortodoxo Party. Led by Fidel Castro they attacked the Moncada army barracks.

Castro was imprisoned for the attack, and later went to Mexico.

On his return to Cuba, he formed the 26th of July Movement alongside his brother Raul and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara.

Guevara and Castro were united in the belief armed guerrilla struggle by revolutionaries could bring about social

HUNDREDS OF protesters took the streets of Havana amidst a Covid-19 outbreak

# US IMPERIALISM, CAPITALISM AND CUBAN PROTESTS

The current protests in Cuba have raised arguments. Sophie Squire analyses the nature of Cuban state capitalism, the pressure from the US and today's revolt

Fidel Castro



**The Cuban government increasingly saw Russia as an example**

revolution. Workers' and peasants struggle was seen as useful, but not central.

Several groups led armed struggle against Batista forces throughout the rest of the 1950s.

The armed struggle was undoubtedly heroic. Between 1957 and 1958, up to 2,000 resistance fighters in urban areas lost their lives.

The repression against the rebels served to turn even more

of the population against the dictatorship and to identify with the resistance.

Batista's support nosedived, with large sections of his army refusing to fight the rebels. By 1958 Batista's state had collapsed.

On New Year's Day 1959 Batista conceded his presidency and Castro declared the revolution victorious. Castro was made prime minister in February that year.

The revolution gave strength to millions battling imperialism across the world.

There was popular support for the rebels from the working class.

But workers' participation was not seen as a mechanism for transforming Cuban society.

A general strike was attempted in 1958, but it failed. The following year, in a show of what workers' struggle could achieve, carefully prepared strikes played a vital part in safeguarding the revolution.

The way the revolution was won set the groundwork for the kind of society that Cuba would become.

**IT WAS a society where a group at the top, decided what was best for the many. They wanted change for the masses, but they abandoned Marx's idea that emancipation of the working class had to be the act of the working class.**

In the early years following the revolution Castro and the newly formed Communist Party knew reforms must be made to satisfy the masses.

Real improvements were made to healthcare and education and large sections of industry were taken into state hands.

But these reforms didn't just benefit workers, they were also made to push for quicker industrialisation to keep Cuba's economy afloat.

The building up of Cuba's economy was considered essential especially after the US began an embargo on exports from the country following the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

This has had severe effects in a country heavily reliant on imports. Every socialist should demand that it goes.

For decades the US has terrorised Cuba, mounting invasions and sponsoring assassinations and terrorist attacks to destabilise the Cuban government.

One of the most notable attempts was the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

CIA backed right-wing rebels attempted an attack on the island.

After this, the Cuban government declared their revolution to be socialist. Cuba allied with Russia. By trading sugar for fuel, the country was able to keep its economy alive.

The Cuban government looked increasingly to Russia as an example of how society could be organised.

The model of state capitalism

that existed in Eastern Europe and China meant the means to accumulate was placed in the hands of the state and its bureaucracy, not private capitalists.

This allowed these countries to continue to compete with rival countries on the global market.

It was this model that Cuba took up, not just as a way to emulate their allies but also as a reaction to a stagnated economy.

Socialism could not be built in one country in Russia. It certainly could not survive in a country as small as Cuba.

To survive the Cuban government set optimistic economic goals.

But to achieve those goals, workers were pushed hard. The constant pursuit of growth led to misery for the masses.

And like other state capitalist countries, Cuban society was marked by repression and the crushing of dissent.

Workers' struggle was actively discouraged and land reforms were carried out without the input of peasants or farmworkers.

Trade unions came under state control.

And what were claimed to be elements of grassroots democracy became methods of transmitting orders from the top.

The aftermath of the revolution was no festival of the oppressed.

LGBT+ people suffered brutal persecution including incarceration and expulsions of tens of thousands of gay men and lesbians starting in 1980.

## THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union from 1988 to 1991, led to food shortages in Cuba.

Yet the regime survived and began to look for another way to sustain its economy. They found the solution in gradually opening up to private businesses.

By the start of the 2000s, there were 405 joint ventures and partnership agreements with big businesses on the island, most being in the tourism industry.

In 2011, economic reforms were made allowing businesses to operate without government administration.

And in February of this year, Cuba's labour minister announced almost all the Cuban state would be opened up for

**Protesters storm the streets of Havana (top)**  
**Counter protests assemble to defend the state (above)**

business. This has not led to any improvement in the lives of ordinary people. But it has created new forms of class struggle.

At one moment it looked as if the US might shift its position.

Former president Barack Obama said he was moving to normalise relations with Cuba. But nothing fundamental changed.

And his successor Donald Trump imposed 240 measures to make the sanctions even tougher.

All of these measures are still in place under Joe Biden. And of course, the protests this month are a reaction to food shortages caused, in part, by US sanctions that intend to starve Cuba.

But they are also a product of living in a society that, despite calling itself Communist, exploits its workers and has allowed a ruling class to form while many live in poverty.

We are always for Cuba against US imperialism. But crucially we are also for workers' self-activity, the right to protest and to organise, and the right to fight for genuine socialism against the government.



## FOCUS ON RESISTANCE

# Struggle, not football shirts, can win the working class

Some think that appealing rightwards is the way to win over working class people. **Simon Basketter** says 'left populism' is a dead end

THERE ARE many calls for people on the left in Britain to engage with many things.

They include Englishness, anti-wokeness, populism, dislike of trans people and the "very real concerns" ordinary people have about (insert right wing thing of your choice).

Some people always argue we should look to the right so Labour can win elections. Others seem to be clinging onto something that used to be called Eurocommunism. Writing at its height of popularity in 1980s in Britain, Alex Callinicos defined this as,

"1: the labour movement is in serious crisis as a result of its decline

"2: capital is, by contrast, on the offensive, and has succeeded in establishing a new form of class rule, 'authoritarian populism', involving both direct ideological appeal to the masses and greater reliance on coercion.

"3: the left's only hope of recovery from its present travails lies in the construction of a broad democratic alliance against Thatcherism, which is the political expression of authoritarian populism."

Replace Margaret Thatcher with Boris Johnson and you have what now passes for this kind of thinking coming from a chunk of the British left.

There is a dubious, slightly desperate yearning for hegemony. The Tories are fighting a culture war. So the thinking is, how can we be as popular as we have decided they are?

These kind of ideas come from a belief that the working class can't or won't fight.

Now, as then, people say the working class is not so much dead, but its consciousness has changed so much that the left must transform itself. The cleverest

## AN ANTI-TORY protest in 2015

of the Eurocommunists, Stuart Hall, argued, "The left must be able, with its own project, to engage the society as a whole, to generalise itself throughout society, to bring over strategic popular majorities on the key issues, to win converts."

During the Falklands war the historian Eric Hobsbawm, who started a lot of this, warned the left, "It is dangerous to leave patriotism exclusively to the right."

## Reclaiming

The long fight for reclaiming something or other for the left has gone from searching for People's Music to wearing an England football shirt.

But Socialist Worker argues that the failure of Labour demonstrates the need for an independent revolutionary party.

This party relates openly to workers when they are involved in struggle and therefore most ready to listen to socialist ideas.

It is possible to draw the opposite conclusion and think that all we need is a few moves towards where people's ideas are now.

The theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe complained about "classism—

that is to say, the idea that the working class represents the privileged agent in which the fundamental impulse of social change resides".

Socialist Worker on this definition remains a class act.

Laclau and Mouffe had the decency to argue for a break with class politics.

That today's noise is from people who are grouchy about the hobgoblin of "identity politics" is admittedly a little odd.

It is vital and necessary to win wide support for socialist ideas.

But this can only be achieved through active participation in and support for workers' struggles.

A battle of ideas is being counter-posed to class struggle. If you think that class struggle is at best unlikely, then only a culture war—so to speak—is possible.

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci called this "political criticism of a minor, day-to-day character, which has as its subject top political leaders and personalities".

He added it was a "conjunctural phenomena which was of little lasting significance".

The clever people around Eurocommunism provided a theoretical backing for the then Labour leader Neil Kinnock.

This time there is a desire to do the same for Keir Starmer or sections of the union bureaucracy.

As Marx said, "As Hegel somewhere said, history repeats itself. What he omitted to mention was the first time as tragedy the second as farce."

## READ MORE

### ●The new Cuba: myths and realities

by Mike Gonzalez  
[isj.org.uk/the-new-cuba-myths-and-realities](https://isj.org.uk/the-new-cuba-myths-and-realities)

### ●Debating critical Marxism in Cuba today

by Héctor Puente Sierra  
[socialistreview.org.uk/447/debating-critical-marxism-cuba-today](https://socialistreview.org.uk/447/debating-critical-marxism-cuba-today)

### ●The Economic War Against Cuba: A Historical and Legal Perspective on the U.S. Blockade

by Salim Lamrani Larry Oberg

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**A battle of ideas is being counter-posed to class struggle**



# Sir Keir Starmer's love of being respectable

by NICK CLARK

NEARLY HALF way through Keir Starmer—A Life of Contrasts, we finally hear something about his politics.

Studying at Oxford in the 1980s, Starmer was part of a loosely left wing, broad milieu, mostly drifting rightwards.

The magazine he helped to produce, Socialist Alternatives, was “Starmer writ large,” says author Nigel Cawthorne.

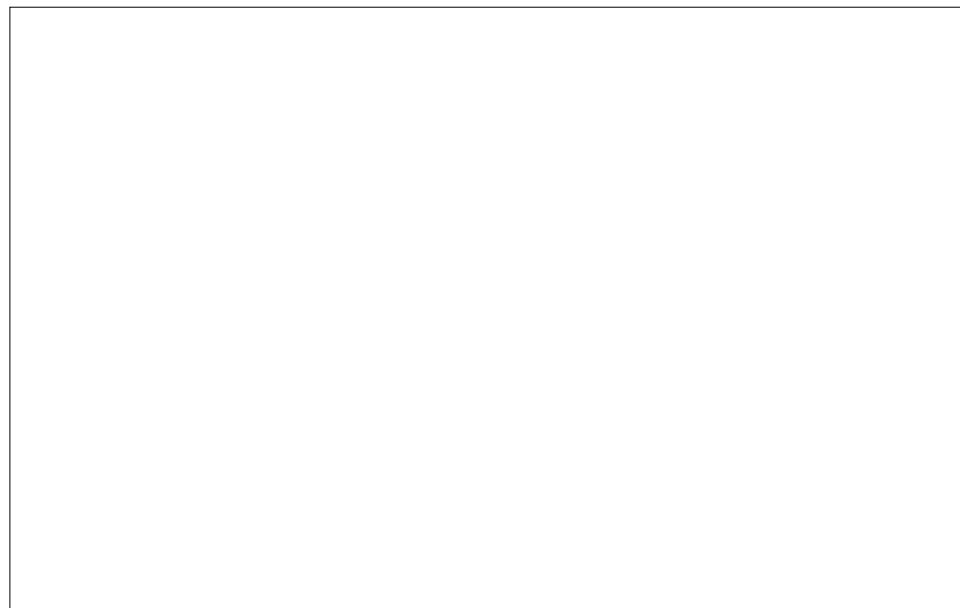
Rather than any clear left wing politics, it preferred instead to “reflect debates.”

It was unpopular even among a dispirited Labour left, in retreat after the recent defeat of the Miners' Strike, and of Bennism.

Starmer, says Cawthorne, held sentiments about “protecting the vulnerable.” But his guiding framework was the law.

“Any radical position could be defended and sealed off as long as it followed the bright beacons set by established law,” says Cawthorne.

It's this vague proximity to left wing politics, shrouding a hard commitment to



IN 2010 Starmer said there would be no charges over the death of Ian Tomlinson

respectability and legitimacy, that made Starmer the right's ideal replacement for Jeremy Corbyn.

Starmer himself is hardly responsible for his own reputation as a left winger. Cawthorne insists on describing his politics as “left left,” whatever that means.

But on the few times

we actually learn from Cawthorne what Starmer thought about anything, they are unremarkably middle of the road.

It's those around him, in the law chambers, Oxford societies and elite grammar school classrooms, who brand him a radical for advocating moderate

prison reform and the like. In fact, as Cawthorne tells us, Starmer always preferred working in the system to challenging it with the left.

“Keir has always subscribed to the view that you have to get into the system not stand outside it,” says an old lawyer colleague Gavin Millar.

That's one of the many quotes that have appeared previously in interviews by other writers, in articles that have Google-friendly headlines such as “Who is Keir Starmer?”

Cawthorne's talent is cobbling together quick biographies to cash in on public interest in whoever happens to be in the news.

That's when he's not churning out such non-fiction titles as Sex Lives of the Popes, Sex Lives of the Great Dictators and Sex Lives of the Famous Gays.

## Influence

If there's anything useful about the book it's that it dredges up some of Starmer's past disgraces as a lawyer and Director of Public Prosecutions.

Starmer's commitment to the law leads him to switch from an interest in miscarriages of justice against Catholics and Republicans in northern Ireland to defending a British soldier.

Lee William Clegg had shot at a car driven by joyriders, killing an 18 year old woman in the back seat.

In 2004, Starmer authored a report—commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board—defending riot cops' tactics in Belfast.

Cops had allowed Unionists to march through a Catholic area, then attacked residents.

When Starmer was appointed Director of Public Prosecutions in 2008, liberals were excited and the right horrified, because of his background as a human rights lawyer.

They needn't have been. One of his first acts was to refuse to prosecute any police officer over the killing of Jean Charles de Menezes.

He—bizarrely—chose to prosecute a group of activists dressed theatrically in boiler suits for impersonating police officers at G20 protests in London.

But he wouldn't initially prosecute any police over the killing of newspaper vendor Ian Tomlinson on the same demonstrations.

None of this is new. But, given parts of the book are suspiciously similar to the news articles they're based on, at least it's all fact.

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# Tories have pushed children of key workers into poverty

A new TUC report has found that over a million key workers' children are living in poverty. Nick Clark investigates the shocking statistics, and argues what the response should be

**MORE than a million children of key workers are living in poverty, according to research commissioned by the TUC union federation.**

And—says the TUC—Tory policies are likely to force even more into poverty.

The research found that one in five children of key workers in Britain live below the official poverty line—rising to nearly a third in the north east of England.

The shocking finding was based on the government's own definition of key worker.

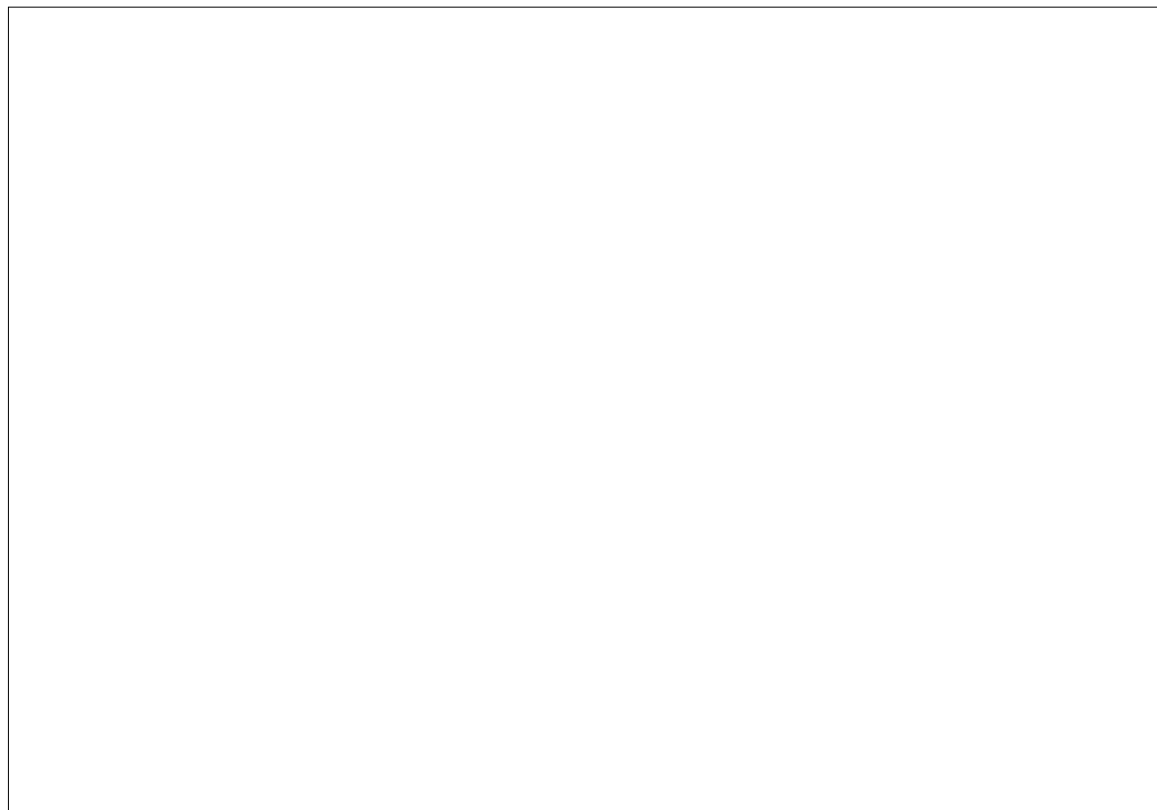
The TUC said that low pay and insecure hours—particularly in jobs such as care, delivery and supermarkets—were the main causes of key worker family poverty.

It added that high housing costs also cut the amount of money key workers have left to spend. And the meagre amount of money from state benefit Universal Credit (UC) was not enough to guarantee their families avoid poverty.

What's more, the TUC said, Tory plans to cut UC for low-income families by £20 per week in October will increase child poverty rates.

It added that the government has capped pay rises for many key workers in the public sector—meaning a real-terms pay cut due to rising inflation.

The proportion of key workers' children in poverty was highest in the north east of England, at just



**A HEALTHWORKER on an NHS pay protest last year**

over 29 percent.

Some 27 percent were in poverty in London, 25 percent in both the West Midlands and in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 23 percent in Wales.

The report also found that that around 2.1 million key workers are currently earning at or below minimum wage.

The figures were calculated using information from the government's

Labour Force Survey, which studies employment in Britain, and its Family Resources Survey, which collects information on household living circumstances.

It's a damning insight into the

reality of life in Tory Britain.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady asked prime minister Boris Johnson raise the national minimum wage to £10 an hour, and to end the public sector pay freeze.

She also asked him to cancel cuts to UC and to increase child benefit above inflation each year.

But O'Grady still tried to appeal to Johnson by arguing that high levels of poverty will damage bosses.

"If we put more money in the pockets of working families, their spending will help our businesses and high streets recover," she said.

"It's the fuel in the tank that our economy needs."

It's weak to pretend that trade unions have the ear of Johnson and the Tories, or to assume they are interested in partnership with trade union leaders.

The Tories have spent more than a decade assaulting working class people at the demands of the bosses and bankers who support them. The trade union resistance to them has been appallingly lacking.

Unions affiliated to the TUC organise key workers in many of the industries the TUC study highlights. Its findings should be a reason to launch a fightback—not to appeal to the Tories' good nature.

**What's your story?**  
Email with your ideas  
[reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Damning report says black and Asian people face systemic racism

**RACISM** in England is systemic, a report by the race equality think tank the Runnymede Trust has found.

The report has since been submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

It said black and minority ethnic people are consistently more likely to live in poverty, to be in low-paid precarious work and to die of Covid.

It blamed much of this on the law and practices by institutions.

It found that black and minority ethnic (BME) people are four times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. And it pointed out that the use of stop and search in the year 2019-2020 had increased for the second time in a row since 2017-2018.

Three quarters of stop and searches ended in no further action from the cops. At the same time,



**Black Lives Matter protest last year**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

black people are 12 times more likely than white people to be prosecuted for cannabis possession in England and Wales.

The report also said that black people are 18 times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched for weapons under "Section 60 laws." Only three

percent of Section 60 searches found a weapon.

Other findings included that black or minority ethnic children make up over half of the child population in prison. This is an increase of 15 percent over the past decade.

The report also contains

damning figures on Britain's immigration system.

Black and minority ethnic people are at greater risk of being detained, and of being held for long periods.

They are also more likely to have "no recourse to public funds" which bars migrants from accessing state benefits.

Meanwhile, Muslims are eight times more likely to be referred to the government's "anti-extremism" Prevent programme.

It found that in the year ending March 2020, 351 Muslim children under the age of 15 had been referred to Prevent.

"Each will have had their personal details entered on police databases accessible by the police and other state agencies for the next six years," it said.

It said that guidance in Prevent led people enforcing the duty—such as public sector workers,

teachers, university workers—to refer Muslims to Prevent for normal religious practices.

The report also condemned the Tories' recent dismissal of the existence of institutional racism and said that it will "fail to improve the outcomes for BME communities and may in fact worsen them."

Other findings included that black and minority ethnic people with learning disabilities die younger than their white counterparts.

There is a 26-year difference between white and black and minority ethnic people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

Had the white population experienced the same risk of death from Covid-19 as black people, there would have been an estimated 58,000 additional deaths between March and May 2020.



FIGHTING THE CUTS

SCHOOLS

## Strikers defend pension

TEACHERS AT Alleyn Court prep school in Southend have completed six days of solid strikes against plans to remove staff from the teachers' pension scheme.

The Alleyn Court Educational Trust plans to replace the current pension scheme with an inferior one.

Teachers say that the trust is trying to force through a fire and rehire scheme.

NEU union regional secretary Paul McLaughlin said, "We believe the school can afford the current scheme—it would cost less than £60K to fund a proposed increase in cost to the scheme."

## Solidarity by students in Derby

TEACHERS AT two schools in Derby walked out for two days last week and one day the week before.

Members of the NEU at Merrill Academy and Lees Brook Community School are fighting a restructure by the Archway Learning trust that operates them.

The trust's bosses based in Nottingham, want to cut jobs and deskill teaching staff to employ cheaper teachers.

Teachers have received a lot of solidarity with pupils starting a petition to support the strike.

## Labour-run council won't listen

VALENCE PRIMARY school teachers in Dagenham, east London, have completed six strike days escalating over three weeks.

The members of the NEU union are fighting a restructure that includes attacks on working conditions.

Almost half of the teaching staff face pay cuts and demotions and a majority will face increased workloads.

Staff remained strong on the picket lines at each campus last week in the face of school bosses who encouraged some staff to strike break.

Barking and Dagenham NEU is demanding that the Labour-run council stops encouraging strike breaking and opposes the attacks.

●Messages of support to [dominic.byrne@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.byrne@lbbd.gov.uk)

UCU UNION members lobby the Association of Colleges

# Workers are set for strikes at 15 colleges

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

WORKERS AT 15 colleges across Britain have voted for strikes in the autumn term.

Members of the UCU union were balloted last month over whether to strike over pay.

Most of the colleges that passed the thresholds demanded by anti-union laws did so with yes votes of over 80 percent.

And colleges such as City of Bristol College and the Capital City College Group returned ballots of over 94 percent in favour of action.

Earlier this year the employers' body the Association of Colleges (AoC) recommended a measly pay rise of just 1 percent for those working in further education (FE).

This is unacceptable especially as FE workers have suffered a real terms pay cuts of 30 percent in the past decade.

Further education is set to receive £400 million in funding from the government, and over half of this has already been awarded. The AoC has

said that its recommended pay rise would be conditional to this funding—yet still only suggested 1 percent.

UCU is demanding that employers grant workers a five percent pay rise.

UCU general secretary Jo Grady said, "This ballot result is an emphatic message from college staff to principals that they will not sit back while their pay is held down."

"Thanks to UCU's campaigning, colleges received an injection of government funding, but they have failed to work with us to prioritise pay."

"Instead, employers have recommended a derisory 1 percent pay rise, which is a real term pay cut."

"College leaders urgently need to come to the negotiating table or they will face severe disruption in the autumn."

It is worth noting that the Unison union is also balloting for strikes in 50 colleges, also to take place in the autumn term.

A coordinated strike in FE could push back against the Tories' attacks on education

and push for better and conditions for workers.

This ballot will also serve as a boost to all of those pushing for action in universities for the autumn term.

### THE COLLEGES

Colleges that crossed the threshold for strikes include

- Lambeth College
- Weymouth College
- Croydon College
- City of Liverpool College
- City College Plymouth
- City of Bristol College
- Sheffield College
- New College Swindon
- South Thames Group (Merton College, Wandsworth and Tooting College, Carshalton College and Kingston College)
- Capital City College Group (City and Islington College, Westminster Kingsway College and College of Northeast London)

### CHESTER UNIVERSITY

WORKERS AND students at Chester university were set to protest on Saturday of this week against redundancy plans.

Bosses initially announced plans to make some 86 members of staff at the university redundant.

They have since said they want to sack fewer people—but jobs are still at risk.

- Join the protest outside Chester Town hall at 12pm on Saturday 24 July. The @ChesterUcu twitter account has also asked people to tweet messages of support in a "twitter storm" on Saturday using the hashtags #reclaimouruniversity and #noredundancieschester.

TRANSPORT

A previous RMT tube strike

## Strikes on Night Tube are coming down the line

WORKERS ON the London Underground are set to strike for four days next month over bosses' proposals to abolish the Night Tube train drivers' grade.

Following a solid vote for action, Night Tube drivers in the RMT are set to walk out for 24 hours on 3,5,24 and 26 August.

Bosses want to force Underground drivers to work a combination of night and day shifts instead of keeping a separate role for Night Tube drivers.

They hope their plans will come into effect on 16 May next year.

Some 3,000 tube drivers will be affected with unfair work schedules impacting

their social and home lives, and 200 jobs are under threat. The strike will target the entire London Underground network.

Many drivers are self-isolating due to a high number of Underground staff catching Covid-19.

On Saturday the Metropolitan line was forced to close as control room staff were "pinged" by the NHS app.

Now, as restrictions are eased, Underground workers will be made to suffer.

RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch said, "This is a blatant attempt to now use that pandemic to start bulldozing through a savage programme of cuts."

RAIL GOURMET

## Action gives train catering bosses food for thought

RAIL GOURMET workers at Edinburgh Waverley station kicked off a strike on Wednesday of last week, opposing a culture of bullying and harassment by bosses.

The strike followed a 100 percent vote for action.

Workers walked out for 24 hours on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday of last week and are set to return to picket lines on Saturday of next week.

The workers also claim bosses forced them to "make up" Covid-19 symptoms to receive tests.

Rail Gourmet operates

on LNER trains between Edinburgh and London.

RMT general secretary, Mick Lynch said the strike "is all about respect and justice in the workplace and the company's continued refusal, even in the face of a massive 100 percent vote for strike action, to do anything about it."

"A culture of bullying and harassment has been allowed to develop at Edinburgh Waverley which has led to a wholesale breakdown in industrial relations and our members have had enough."

ABELLIO

## Scotrail bosses want to 'grind workers into dust'

WORKERS FOR Scotrail continue their Sunday strikes for equality and workplace justice with solid support.

Many services were affected forcing many cancellations across the

network. The long-running pay dispute is set to continue until at least 5 September

The RMT union accuses Abellio and Transport Scotland of trying to grind loyal staff into the dust.



## MANUFACTURING

# Barnoldswick strikes again after betrayal

by ISABEL RINGROSE

**WORKERS AT the Rolls Royce Plant in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, are back on strike.**

They held a high-profile strike at the end of last year. But issues that seemed to have been solved then have now reappeared.

A group of specialist engineers began a new wave of action on Monday.

Unite union regional officer Ross Quinn told Socialist Worker the first picket line was “great”. “There’s been lots of support, and members have come out,” he said.

## Closure

A nine-week strike in 2020 was called to oppose plans to reduce production at the factory amid fears of its closure.

An agreement was reached between Rolls-Royce and Unite that guaranteed a minimum of 350 workers would remain at the site, and a training centre would be built.

But now 17 engineers are striking for five days in the week prior to a two week annual shut down.

Further strikes are set



ON THE picket line on Monday

PICTURE: UNITE NORTH WEST

to begin on 9 August to 20 August. Other workers at the plant are set to be balloted later in the summer.

Quinn said, “After what the employers did last time, we can’t say we’re surprised. Especially given the decade of disappointments workers here have suffered”.

The previous strikes won a guarantee that there would be no redundancies for two years. But already workers have started to be offloaded.

Quinn said, “Our members would rather be out here fighting to do something about it rather than shrugging their shoulders.”

“Managers have also told workers that the training school will be knocked down two years after its completion.”

Bosses also plan to have only 200 people on site, rather than the agreed 350.

Quinn said workers need “clear guarantees” that they won’t be “stood up in future”.

“At each stage the company gave us warm words about the future of the site, but we haven’t seen material differences to have any confidence.”

Strikes this time around won’t be restricted by Covid-19 laws, so the strikers are hoping to “be a lot more visible than they were last time”.

“We’ll do whatever it takes,” Quinn said.

Swift escalation and involving more workers will be crucial.

## LGBT+ LIBERATION

# Join protest in London on Saturday to reclaim Pride

>>from page 20

“a hostile environment” for LGBT+ people.

The first pride marches were to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in 1969 in New York, US, which gave birth to the gay liberation movement. Prides were then used as a place to fight for LGBT+ rights.

But trade union delegations, placards and chanting have slowly been replaced by corporations plastering their logos over pride events or using the rainbow to reel in customers.

The rise in militant prides, such as London Trans+ Pride, shows a growing mood of anger at the Tories.

Socialists must argue for militancy and for trade unions and workers to be involved in the struggle against LGBT+ oppression.

Winning full liberation will require continued expressions of rage at the system and a focus on class unity.

●Saturday 24 July, assemble 1pm at the Nelson Mandela Statue, Parliament Square, London

## OUTSOURCED WORKERS



Taking the knee at the picket line on Monday

PICTURE: JESS WALSH

# Beis strikers in renewed battle with ISS outsourcer

OUTSOURCED workers at the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (Beis) in central London began a three day strike on Monday of this week.

The cleaners, security guards and other support staff work for outsourcer ISS.

They are fighting for an end to low pay, and for improved conditions, bonuses for lockdown working and annual leave owed from last year.

The strikers began their walkout with a show of strength on Monday. Security guards joined the picket line after ending the night

shift. The pickets—many black or migrant workers—also took the knee.

The same group of workers fought and won some gains with a long-running all-out strike in 2019. Now, they are taking on bosses again—voting by 97 percent for strikes on an 82 percent turnout.

The workers’ PCS union has always insisted that the government department that employs them is ultimately responsible for their low pay.

It says all outsourced workers must be brought in house and treated the same as workers employed directly by the civil service.

## CLEANERS

# From Royal Parks to Facebook—three groups of cleaners fight back

PRIVATISED cleaners working at Royal Parks could take action as early as Friday of next week.

The workers, members of the PCS and UVW unions, are fighting for improved pay and conditions, and the reinstatement of a sacked member of staff.

The 32 PCS members voted by 100 percent for strikes on an 81 percent turnout.

Their bosses at Just Ask Estates has a contract to clean toilets at the parks in London.

It sacked cleaner Margaret Lokko despite the fact she informed her manager that she was delayed returning from Ghana due to the pandemic travel restrictions.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said, “The treatment of staff who do an

important job keeping key facilities functioning at the Royal Parks, is a disgrace.”

The workers also want Just Ask Estates to recognise their unions, and to bring their pay and conditions in line with workers directly employed by Royal Parks.

■CLEANING AND concierge workers at the luxury West End Quay housing development have won significant concessions from their employers after threatening to strike.

The UVW union members, who are outsourced to the First Port UK property management services, were balloted for strikes over the lack of sick pay, bullying and harassment and the slashing of their Christmas pay.

The threat of strikes alone has meant that workers

have now gained a bonus of £2,000, time and a half for overtime, more in-house hiring and sick pay written in their contracts.

■CLEANERS AT Facebook headquarters in London are fighting back—again.

Members of the Caiwu union have organised a protest outside the social media giants offices on Wednesday 21 July.

Last year cleaners held a number of protests outside the offices over unsafe conditions, bullying and slashed hours.

This time workers outsourced to the Churchill Group are the ones on the offensive. ●Join the protest on Wed 21 July, 4 pm, Facebook headquarters, 10 Brock St, London NW1 3FG and tweet support to @caiwuunion

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Gravediggers of capitalism

GRAVEDIGGERS IN Barry have balloted for strikes after the council tried to force them to work longer hours for no extra cash.

The council of Wales’ largest town has walked away from negotiations with the GMB union and served notice to six cemetery workers to change conditions without their consent.

The ballot was due to close on Tuesday this week.

■A STRIKE ballot by workers in Tower Hamlets, east London, was set to end on Thursday of this week.

The workers—members of the Unison union—are demanding improvements to a contract that the Labour-run council forced on them last year.

Workers struck against the councils’ fire and rehire tactics in 2020.

Now they could fight again.

## ROUND-UP

■WORKERS AT the Weetabix factory in Kettering have voted for industrial action in a dispute over shift payments.

Udward union members voted unanimously for action and the union said it anticipates that the first 24-hour stoppage will be called within a week from 28 July.

■STRIKES AT housing charity St Mungo’s have been called off after management agreed to an independent review into bullying.

Strikes have taken place since 22 April.

But despite voting for the review and end to the strikes, a Unite rep still remains suspended for raising grievances.

■BIOMEDICAL SCIENTISTS at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust have been re-balloted for action over pay.

The 21 workers have been on strike since 31 May. The new ballot closes on 27 July.

Management reneged on a pay upgrade deal that it agreed to in 2019.



# Tory freedom day disaster

As Covid cases continue to soar the Tories have decided to lift all restrictions and scientists are already ringing alarm bells writes Sam Ord

**AT THE start of this month, Boris Johnson warned that Covid-19 cases could rise to as many as 50,000 a day by 19 July. For once he was telling the truth—indeed he has over fulfilled his prediction.**

Last Saturday some 54,674 new cases were recorded across Britain. It was the highest total for six months, equalling the appalling numbers in January that forced school closures.

Big business, the media and some trade unions are bemoaning the large number of people forced to isolate themselves when “pinged” by the NHS app for being near someone with Covid-19.

The Unite union claims the high number of self-isolating workers is on the “verge of shutting” factories across Britain.

But instead of blaming the disastrous Tory handling of the pandemic, Unite’s top brass fears self-isolation will result in industries moving to China.

Unite’s assistant general secretary Steve Turner said, “It is not an exaggeration to say factories are on the verge of shutting and that at some sites hundreds of staff are off work.

“One major engine supplier has said that so many people are absent and orders so far behind that work may to be permanently relocated to China.”

## Ignores

The simple truth that Turner ignores is that there are a lot of pings because there are a lot of cases.

On present figures, which are set to worsen, there are 350,000 new cases in a week.

Simply put the root cause of economic and social disruption is transmission, not isolation.

The Tories’ “freedom day” on Monday dawned with the health secretary catching the

virus and the chancellor and prime minister being forced to isolate themselves.

They tried to avoid this by claiming they were joining a “pilot programme”, but were forced to U-turn after an outcry.

Despite this the Covid-19 safety restrictions were abandoned anyway with thousands attending nightclubs midnight openings. Over 1,200 scientists and doctors have signed an open letter to The Lancet medical journal opposing the government’s plan for mass infection as a “dangerous and unethical experiment”.

They denounced the Tories’ strategy of “herd immunity by mass infection,” which will “place 48 percent of the population (children included) who are not yet fully vaccinated, including the clinically vulnerable and the immunosuppressed, at unacceptable risk.”

Chief medical officer Chris Whitty admitted that the number of people in hospital with coronavirus could reach “quite scary” levels within weeks. Cancer patients, disabled people and other clinically extremely vulnerable groups say they will feel unsafe stepping out of the house after hearing that mask and social distancing requirements are to be abandoned, charities have warned.

Campaigners estimate that 3.8 million people have been left feeling abandoned by the government’s shift towards promoting “personal responsibility” as the sole means of dealing with the surging Covid-19 infection rates.

In Britain, almost 38 percent of people who contract Covid-19 are still dealing with one or more symptoms 12 weeks later, according to the React study undertaken by London’s Imperial College.

## Affected

Dr Toby Hillman, an expert on this issue, said most of those affected were aged in their 30s, 40s or 50s and previously fit.

This defies the stereotype that Covid-19 causes most problems for elderly patients with existing conditions.

Hillman said, “I think the degree of impairment that people are experiencing, with long Covid, you could compare with some of the impairment which people had with polio.

“We’re talking about a younger population. They’re teachers, they’re bus drivers.

“Many of them are really struggling to get back to work full time, or in some cases even struggling to get back to work at all.”

Scotland has now moved to level zero of Covid restrictions on Monday, meaning pubs and restaurants can open until midnight.

Most Covid rules in Wales are set to be scrapped from 7 August, but face coverings will still be required in most public places and on public transport.

## PROTEST WANTS TO RECLAIM PRIDE

RECLAIM PRIDE is set to go ahead on Saturday to tell Boris Johnson “to stop stalling on LGBT+ rights” and march for LGBT+ liberation.

Organisers say the march “gets back to the roots of pride, being both a celebration and a protest for LGBT+ rights”.

Its demands are to ban LGBT+ conversion therapy, reform the Gender Recognition Act and create a safe haven for LGBT+ refugees.

The march will also demand decriminalisation of LGBT+ people worldwide and solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

The Reclaim Pride



ON TRANS pride

march will take a similar route to the first British pride march in 1972.

A pride that looks to the radical roots of LGBT+ fightback is vital at a time when LGBT+ rights are being pushed back under the Tories’ culture wars. And pride events have been hijacked by companies looking to make a profit.

Nearly two fifths of LGBT+ workers in England have faced homophobia in the workplace. On Monday the TUC union federation wrote a letter to equalities minister Liz Truss to call for policy change and criticising her “inaction”.

This follows the government’s scrapping of its LGBT+ Action Plan earlier this year.

And the disbanding of the LGBT Advisory Panel following the resignation of three panel members who accused the Tories of creating

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